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THE NEW YORKER

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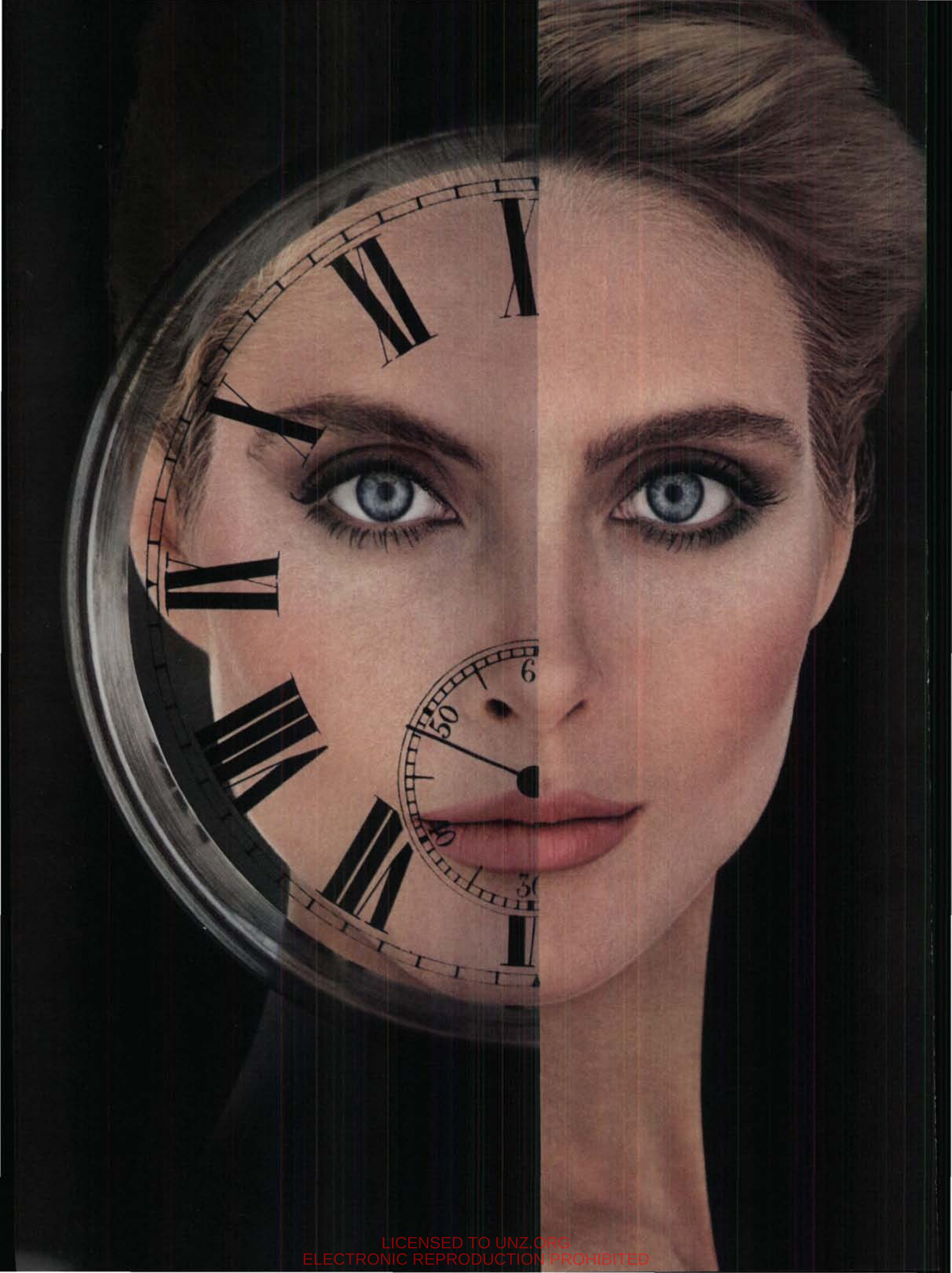
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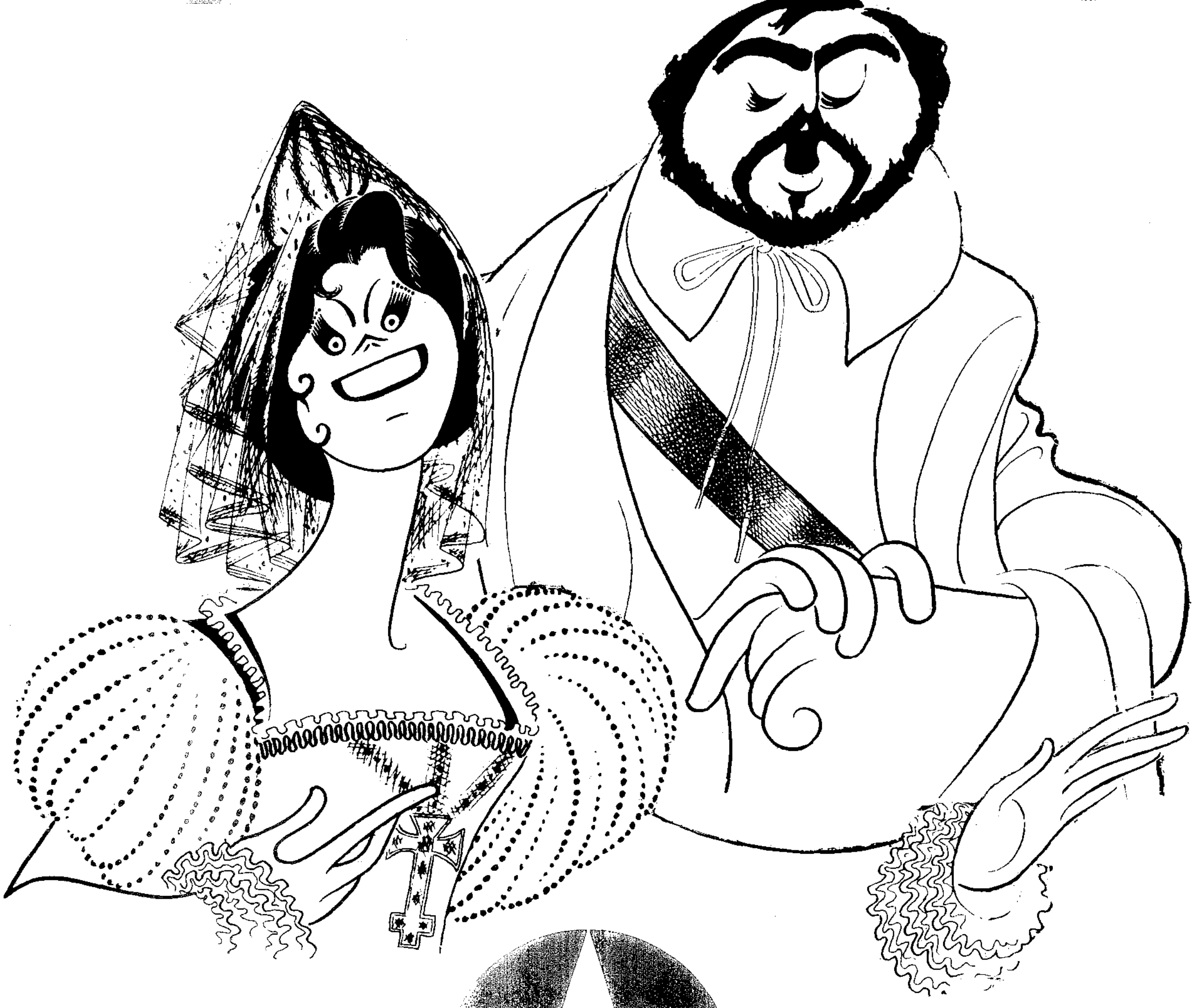

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Boogie Woogie and Booker T—A play by Wesley Brown. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, March 8.)

Broadway Bound—A rueful comedy in which Neil Simon studies the middle-class depths from which he sprang and has kept springing. The cast includes Linda Lavin, Jonathan Silverman, John Randolph, Philip Sterling, Jason Alexander, and Phyllis Newman. The director is Gene Saks. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/15/86.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2. Special performance for the Actors' Fund Sunday evening, Feb. 22.)

Circle Repertory Company—A comedy whodunit by John Bishop, THE MUSICAL COMEDY MURDERS OF 1940, is the third in this season's series. (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 9; Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Cleveland and Halfway Back—A comedy by Leslie Lyles, with Keith Reddin and Cynthia Nixon. (Ensemble Studio Theatre, 549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, March 1.)

Coastal Disturbances—Tina Howe's funny and beautiful play about love is set on a private beach on Massachusetts' North Shore. Annette Bening, as a photographer from this city, and Timothy Daly, as a lifeguard, are the beguiling lovers, and among the other actors, as summer people, are Rosemary Murphy, Jonas Abry, Heather Mac Rae, and Ronald Guttman. Carole Rothman is the able director. (12/1/86) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Colored Museum—A sharp, satiric revue on the subject of blackness and related matters, which is almost done in by damnable sound amplification. George C. Wolfe was the clever writer, and L. Kenneth Richardson the able director. The performers, all of them splendid, are Loretta Devine, Tommy Hollis, Reggie Montgomery, Vickilyn Reynolds, and Danitra Vance. (11/10/86) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

The Common Pursuit—An English import. Six Cambridge undergraduates, in the sixties, plan to launch a literary magazine in accordance with the rigorous standards of the critic F. R. Leavis, and in the ensuing twenty years manage to breach these standards. Simon Gray's play, while not especially original, is consistently entertaining, and it is very well performed, under the direction of the dramatist and Michael McGuire. (11/3/86) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Danger: Memory!—A pair of dim one-acters by Arthur Miller, but with good performances by Geraldine Fitzgerald and Mason Adams ("I Can't Remember Anything") and by Kenneth McMillan and James Tolkan ("Clara"). (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2. Closes Sunday, March 8.)

Division Street—Steve Tesich's very funny farce about a former (and reformed) radical leader in the sixties who returns privately to Chicago to apply for a job at an insurance company. By a fluke, he is recognized, and all hope of privacy vanishes. Sight gags abound and so do strong, jokey lines. The performance as a whole could be better, but Olek Krupa and Kathleen Wilhoite—two fine actors—could not. (2/16/87) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8.)

Equity Library Theatre—The fifth in this season's series of eight productions is a revival of Lillian Hellman's THE LITTLE FOXES. (Equity Library Theatre, 103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, March 1. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

Fragments of a Greek Trilogy—A revival of an Andrei Serban–Elizabeth Swados collaboration—distillations of "Medea," "Electra," and "The Trojan Women"—directed by Mr. Serban, with music by Miss Swados. The three works are performed in ancient Greek and Latin. ("Medea": Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30, and Saturdays and Sundays at 6. . . . ¶ Double-bill performances of "Electra" and "The Trojan Women": Thursdays through Sundays at 7:30. La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

A Girl's Guide to Chaos—A comedy by Cynthia Heimel. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 247-0393. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Groucho: A Life in Revue—A surprisingly lively and touching show about the great comedian/humorist. Frank Ferrante's dedicated impersonation becomes a true performance; Les Marsden, doubling, comes close to Chico and seems inspired as Harpo; and Faith Prince

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 25 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and publisher; Jonathan E. Newhouse, executive vice-president; Rebecca Wesson Darwin, vice-president and associate publisher; Sam R. Spoto, vice-president; Stuart H. Jason, vice-president and treasurer; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Lynn W. Guthrie, advertising director; Frank Mustacato, circulation director. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 2360, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 67½ Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN. Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, FL 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, FL 33629. Vol. LXIII, No. 1, February 23, 1987. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash.
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Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $44.00. Other foreign, one year, $52.00, payable in advance. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, 25 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

ALDO FALLAI

An ease about being grand . . .

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deftly acts the women in their lives, among them, of course, Margaret Dumont. Arthur Marx (son of Groucho) and Robert Fisher were the playwrights; Mr. Marx directed. (10/20/86) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Jackie Mason's "The World According to Me!"—Jackie Mason is a classic standup Jewish comedian, the George Washington of the Borscht Belt. His material consists almost entirely of outrageous insults addressed to Jews, Italians, Poles, Puerto Ricans, and Wasps. (Only the Irish escape unscathed, and who knows why? Perhaps they are being offered the greatest insult of all.) For more than thirty years, Mason's audiences—that is, his victims—have found him hilarious, and the sorry truth of the matter is that he *is* hilarious, for reasons that might well cause Freud himself to break down and sob as he sought to explain them. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Kvetch—A comedy by Steven Berkoff. Opens Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 7. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill—A play of sorts about one of Billie Holiday's last engagements, at a night club in Philadelphia, well sung and performed by the personable Lonette McKee, who bears no resemblance—vocal, physical, or temperamental—to the late Miss Holiday. (9/29/86) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 6. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

The Maderati—A comedy by Richard Greenberg. Preview Wednesday, Feb. 18. Opens officially on Thursday, Feb. 19. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Me and My Girl—A fifty-year-old British musical, once starred in by Lupino Lane. His worthy successor is Robert Lindsay, who in his day has played Hamlet and can evidently play anything. (8/25/86) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 947-0033. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

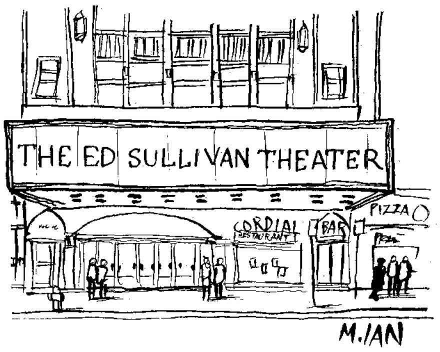
Moms—A celebration of the great black comedienne Moms Mabley, as impersonated, with shrewdness and wit, by Clarice Taylor, in a play by Alice Childress. Songs by Nathan Woodard and Miss Childress. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Hudson Guild Theatre, 441 W. 26th St. 760-9810. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, March 8.)

My Gene—Colleen Dewhurst in a one-woman show about Carlotta Monterey, Eugene O'Neill's third wife. Written by Barbara Gelb, and directed by André Ernotte. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Sex Tips for Modern Girls—A musical with a book by Peter Eliot Weiss and score and lyrics by John Sereda. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

South Pacific—A revival by the New York City Opera of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. The director is Gerald Friedman. Previews Friday evening and Saturday matinée, Feb. 27-28. Opens officially on Saturday evening, Feb. 28, and will run through Sunday, April 26. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Stardust—A revue featuring songs by lyricist Mitchell Parish and his many collaborators, including Hoagy Carmichael, Duke Ellington, and Glenn Miller. Conceived and directed by Albert Harris. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 582-5340. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Stepping Out—Tommy Tune has skillfully directed a play by the English playwright Richard Harris, about some North London lonelyhearts who manage to establish contact with each other by learning to dance. Who would guess that this would make a happy evening in the theatre, but it does. (1/26/87) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Sweet Sue—A failed comedy by A. R. Gurney, Jr., about a divorced artist in middle age and a young man who is her son's roommate at college. Four actors (Mary Tyler Moore, Lynn Redgrave, Barry Tubb, and John K. Linton) portray this woebegone couple, who love neither wisely nor too well. (1/19/87) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

The Widow Claire—Horton Foote continues to explore the lives of the citizens of Harrison, Texas. The principal characters here are a racy, nervous widow and young Horace Robedaux, and they are played to perfection by Hallie Foote and Matthew Broderick. (12/29/86) (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

York Theatre Company—A revival of John Gray's **BILLY BISHOP GOES TO WAR**, a two-man musical entertainment, first presented in 1980. With Robin Haynes and T. O. Sterrett. Opens officially on Thursday, Feb. 19, and will run through Sunday, March 1. (Murphy Center Theatre, 555 E. 90th St. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3. For information about tickets, call 534-5366.)

Long Runs—**BIG RIVER:** A musical version of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." Twain's great novel has been respectfully dealt with in a book by William Hauptman, with music and lyrics by Roger Miller. Heidi Landesman has somehow managed to put the Mississippi River onstage. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LA CAGE AUX FOLLES:** A dazzling production of a musical that has little wit and a lot of phony sentimentality about the tenderhearted family life of homosexuals. The music, by Jerry Herman, is Broadway-romantic. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 757-2626. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **CATS:** Ezra Pound nicknamed T. S. Eliot "Old Possum," and under that name Eliot wrote a collection of poems about cats, and now the cats are on display on Broadway, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, scenery by John Napier, and direction by Trevor Nunn. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **DROOD:** Old-fashioned mock-Victorian nonsense, with book and songs by Rupert Holmes and direction by Wilford Leach. The cast is headed by George Rose. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** 11,160 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **42ND STREET:** Once upon a time there was a silly-wonderful Warner Brothers musical about a young hoofer who goes on in place of a disabled star and herself becomes a star overnight. The legitimate musical that has been fashioned from the movie musical is just as silly but by no means as wonderful. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES:** A superb revival of John Guare's brilliant, ferocious comedy, with Swoosie Kurtz and John Mahoney, among other fine performers. Jerry Zaks was the director. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **I'M NOT RAPPAPORT:** Herb Gardner's synthetic, though often entertaining, comedy about two old men who share a bench in Central Park, starring Ossie Davis and Hal Linden. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS:** Based on Roger Corman's 1960 horror quickie about a man-eating plant, this exuberant, jokey musical is wholly free of camp. The score is by Alan Menken, and Howard Ashman directed and wrote the book and lyrics. Martin P. Robinson designed the menacing plant. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 2 and 5.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **OH! CALCUTTA!:** A collection of short sketches that purport to give us a refreshing view of sex and do not. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302. Mondays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 9:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **SOCIAL SECURITY:** A lively, conventional comedy by Andrew Bergman. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **SWEET CHARITY:** A hit twenty years ago and deservedly a hit today. Bob Fosse has been its chief maker, assisted by Neil Simon (book), Cy Coleman and Dorothy Fields (songs), and Robert Randolph (scenery). Ann Reinking stars. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 869-0550. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

Barnard-Columbia Greek Drama Group—Presenting Sophocles' "Antigone," in ancient Greek. (Minor Latham Playhouse, Barnard College, Broadway at 119th St., entrance at 117th St. Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 26-28, at 8. For information about tickets, call 280-6890.)

Beehive—A musical revue, featuring girl-group songs of the sixties. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 982-9292. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8; Fridays at 7:30 and 10; and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 5.)

Forbidden Broadway—A musical satire of Shubert Alley denizens. The lyrics to the song parodies are by Gerard Alessandrini. (Palsson's Upstairs, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8:30; Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 and 11:30; and Sundays at 8:30.)

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Tentative schedule of final performances of the season—Wednes-

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day, Feb. 18, at 8: "Prodigal Son," "Piccolo Balletto," "Sonatine," and "Fanfare." . . . ¶ Thursday, Feb. 19, at 8: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 20, at 8: "Prodigal Son," "Piccolo Balletto," "Pas de Deux," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 21, at 2: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8: "Sinfonia Mistica," "Piccolo Balletto," "Pas de Deux," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Sunday, Feb. 22, at 1: "Histoire du Soldat Suite," "Sinfonia Mistica," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." . . . ¶ Sunday, Feb. 22, at 7: A benefit program consisting of "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Norwegian Moods," "Valse Triste," and excerpts from fourteen other ballets. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Twyla Tharp Dance—Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 18-19, and Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 8: "Baker's Dozen," with Miles Fusco, jazz piano; and "In the Upper Room." . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 20, at 8; Saturday, Feb. 21, at 2 and 8; Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2; and Thursday, Feb. 26, at 8: "Ballare," with Mr. Fusco and Jeananne Albee, duo piano; "Fugue;" and "Nine Sinatra Songs." . . . ¶ Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 8: "As Time Goes By," with the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble; and "The Catherine Wheel III." . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 27, at 8: "Nine Sinatra Songs" and "In the Upper Room." . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 28, at 2: "The Catherine Wheel III" and "In the Upper Room." . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8: "As Time Goes By," with the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble; and "In the Upper Room." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Through Sunday, March 1.)

Pilobolus—Final performances of the engagement—Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 18-19, and Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8: "Bonsai," the solo from "The Empty Suitor," "Nonce," "What Grows in Huygen's Window," "Pseudopodia," and "Land's Edge." . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 20, at 8, and Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2: "Ciona," "Lure," "Walklyndon," "Return to Maria La Baja," and "Day Two." . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 21, at 2: "Monkshood's Farewell," "Televisitation," "Ocellus," "Can't Get Started," and "Carmina Burana, Side Two." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Rosalind Newman and Dancers—Presenting "The Technology of Tears" (première) and "4: Stories." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 7:30; Wednesday through Saturday, Feb. 25-28, at 8; and Sunday, March 1, at 2 and 7:30.)

Stephen Petronio Company—In "Simulacrum Reels" (première) and "Walk-In." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Wednesdays, except Feb. 18, through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Sundays at 3. Through Sunday, March 8.)

Danceworks—A company from Boston in a program of contemporary dance. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, W. 120th St. and Riverside Dr. 864-2929. Thursday, Feb. 19, and Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 21-22, at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Abilene Café, 359 Second Ave., at 21st St. (473-8908)—A corner bar and restaurant that offers ribs, liver, Bud, and several varieties of the blues. **HUBERT SUMLIN,** the Mississippi-born guitarist who played lean, edgy solos behind Howlin' Wolf for twenty-two years, heads up a band on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21. The following weekend, Feb. 27-28, another Wolf alumnus, saxophonist **EDDIE SHAW,** pays a visit. Other bluespersons can be found here during the rest of the week. Music from nine.

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**MICHAEL FEINSTEIN,** the thirty-year-old singer-pianist and onetime secretary to Ira Gershwin, performs his repertoire with old-fashioned romantic ardor for grateful audiences in the Oak Room. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

Angry Squire, 216 Seventh Ave., at 23rd St. (242-9066)—A long, narrow, nautically appointed bar and restaurant. Sea dogs account for a very small percentage of the clientele, and forecastle chanteys for a very small percentage of the music. **RICKY FORD,** a tenor saxophonist who spent some time in Mercer Ellington's post-Duke band and with Charles Mingus, leads a trio on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21. On Saturday, Feb. 28, singer Maura Ellyn's trio comes aboard. Sets begin Sundays through Thursdays at nine-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at ten.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—**BLOSSOM DEARIE** has a wee girl's voice but it is expressive and her diction is impeccable, and the songs she chooses to sing ("I'm Hip," "My Attorney, Bernie," "Bye-Bye Country Boy," "Bruce") are perfectly suited to her. Her concerts begin at six-thirty Wednesdays through Saturdays. **YMA SUMAC,** the Peruvian singer whose five-octave range knocked everybody's socks off when she first appeared in this country thirty-five years ago, puts her reportedly undiminished voice on display at nine Tuesdays through Saturdays. The eighteen-member comedy troupe Artificial Intelligence performs at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A large, carpeted, bemirrored jazz club with a spectacular piece of neon art on the back wall (the Manhattan skyline and attendant celestial bodies) and with bright clusters of musicians on the dais. The Yellowjackets, a rhythm-and-electronics outfit that did some of the music for the new "Star Trek" movie, will be in orbit through Sunday, Feb. 22; on Monday, Feb. 23, pianist Amy Duncan brings in a group that features saxophonist **LEW TABACKIN;** and starting Tuesday, Feb. 24, the Brazilian percussion-and-vocal team of **AIRTO** and **FLORA PURIM** will share the bill with the New York Samba Band. Music after nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Music for many kinds of people, including unreconstructed folkies, beboppers, urban cowboys, and rock-and-roll fundamentalists. The lineup: Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21, George Howard; Tuesday, Feb. 24, **SUN RA** and his **ARKESTRA,** which will continue its tribute to Swing-era bands by playing the music of Jimmy Lunceford and Count Basie; Thursday and Friday, Feb. 26-27, drummer **MAX ROACH'S** quartet; and Saturday, Feb. 28, at seven-thirty, the Fast Folk Musical Magazine show, with **DAVID MASSENGILL,** John Gorka, Rod MacDonald, and others. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A real New York bar: it has dark wood panelling, Type A conversationalists, and some very good pianists (who play the very beautiful concert grand that Paul Desmond bequeathed to the proprietor) and bassists. **STEVE KUHN** and **RON CARTER** collaborate through Saturday, Feb. 21, and on Monday, Feb. 23, **JACK WILSON** and **BOOTS MALESON** go to work. On Sunday, Feb. 22, tenor saxophonist and growly vocalist **BIG NICK NICHOLAS** will be here with his trio. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—It's so nice in here—silken woodwork and long tables with pink tablecloths and pink napkins—you might mistake it for a jazz club on a movie set but for the real musicians onstage. **HELEN MERRILL,** whose whispery voice seems to suggest that each word she sings is a secret, is here through Sunday, Feb. 22, and on Tuesday, Feb. 24, **CHRIS CONNOR** steps forward. On Mondays, **BUCKY** and **JOHN PIZZARELLI** play father-and-son guitar duets. Music from nine every night but Monday, when it begins at eight. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The soft-hued, dreamy murals in the Café Carlyle are by Marcel Vertès, and the sprightly jazz is by pianist-singer **GEORGE SHEARING** (see page 126, this issue) and bassist **DON THOMPSON.** Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at ten and midnight. . . . ¶ Over in the Bemelmans Bar, Ludwig Bemelmans' rabbits perform everyday stunts on the walls and **BARBARA CARROLL** sings and plays the piano Tuesdays through Saturdays from nine-forty-five.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Clarinettist **EDDIE DANIELS** performs in this velvet-and-mirror-walled music box with pianist **ROGER KELLAWAY**, bassist **MICHAEL MOORE**, and a string quartet through Sunday, Feb. 22. Guitarist **VIC JURIS'S** trio will be here on Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 24-25, and on Thursday, Feb. 26, guitarist **PAT MARTINO'S** threesome takes charge. Monday remains the property of **LES PAUL**, who is not a cellist. Music from eight Tuesdays through Sundays, and from nine on Mondays. Dining.

GREENE STREET, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—A cathedral-size bar and restaurant where you can hear and see (but from the bar you may want to use binoculars) good pianists. The keyboard is in **ARMEN DONELIAN'S** hands through Saturday, Feb. 21, and starting Tuesday, Feb. 24, it will belong to Peter Malinverni. Sets begin at seven Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at seven-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Mondays.

GREGORY'S, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—A tiny jazz outpost in swinging-singles country. Wednesdays through Saturdays, Kitt Moran sings with accompaniment from pianist Mike Moran and bassist Andy Eulau; Sundays and Mondays are set aside for singer-pianist Howard Barry and bassist Bill Moring; and Tuesdays are claimed by guitarist **CHUCK WAYNE'S** trio. Music from about ten.

KNICKERBOCKER SALOON, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A pleasant, low-key bar and restaurant in the piano-bass district. Out-of-towners may notice the sign above the bar which says "When you leave New York, you ain't goin' nowhere." This is a joke, of course. **JAMES WILLIAMS**, a high-spirited Memphis-born pianist who passed through Art Blakey's hard-bop academy, works with bassist **RUFUS REID** through Saturday, Feb. 21, and on Tuesday, Feb. 24, **BILL MAYS** and **RON CARTER** swing into action. Music from about nine-thirty.

LONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—Scary-movie buffs like the epic-size iguana on the roof of this establishment; Texans like the reminders of home; and the musicians like the Texans, the New Yorkers, and the other visitors from this planet who regularly fill the joint up. Thursday, Feb. 19, venerable Louisiana swamp cat **DR. JOHN**; Friday, Feb. 20, La Bamba & the Hubcaps; Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 23-24, engagé singer **HOLLY NEAR**; Wednesday, Feb. 25, the jazz-funk bands **KELVYNATOR** and **VERNON REID'S LIVING COLOUR**; and Friday and Saturday, Feb. 27-28, **STEVE FORBERT'S** band and the **BEN VAUGHN COMBO**. Music after nine. Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub, local to the well-dressed businessperson. Nancy LaMott, Sara Krieger, and other singers are concentrating on the lyrics of Johnny Mercer. A trio led by **KENNY WERNER**, the pianist in Mel Lewis's big band, provides accompaniment. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and eleven. On Monday nights from nine-thirty to midnight, Woody Allen is likely to show up to play celebrity clarinet with a New Orleans-style sextet. Closed Sundays.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A popular, north-of-chic upper West Side gathering place. Jazz, Latin jazz, and rhythm and blues are what the people come inside for. Gloria Lynne sings here on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21, and Dominican pianist **MICHEL CAMILO** brings in his trio for four nights starting Wednesday, Feb. 25. Music after nine. Dining.

RITZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Rock and roll of the Present Moment—and, occasionally, of the Classical Era (the fifties), the Romantic Era (the sixties), and the OPEC Era (the seventies)—in a big, fancy thirties-era ballroom. Thursday and Friday, Feb. 19-20, the Minneapolis trio Hüsker Dü, which, the heavy-metal umlauts notwithstanding, plays old-fashioned eight-cylinder punk rock; Saturday, Feb. 21, the genuine California heavy-metal band Megadeth; Sunday, Feb. 22, the Georgia Satellites, a best-selling bar band from the former debtors' colony; Thursday, Feb. 26, Julian Cope; Friday, Feb. 27, Southside Johnny & the Jukes; and Saturday, Feb. 28, **CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN**. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eleven. Dancing.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Tropical-forest décor (including a larger-than-life parrot suspended above the bandstand) and head-swirling music from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and

Picture it.
Your boss has just ordered Chivas.
Two colleagues have just ordered Dewar's.
And you say,
"Famous Grouse, please."

"Famous *what?*" say all three. "Grouse," say you. "The Famous Grouse."

And with a wee dram of luck, the boss may ask for a taste.

You can prod him, of course, by explaining that Scotland knows no finer Scotch...that, indeed, it ranks first in that land of experts.

Admit casually that it costs a bit more than Dewar's, *"but a tad less than yours, sir."*

As always, the taste will be the clincher. "Aha," he will say, "I like *our* Scotch." Whereupon, you have hop-scotched your competition.

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the U.S.A. Wednesday, Feb. 18, singer-poet **GIL SCOTT-HERON'S** trio; Thursday, Feb. 19, merengue singer Johnny Ventura; Friday, Feb. 20, Tabou Combo, a Brooklyn-based Haitian band; Saturday, Feb. 21, **MIKATA;** Tuesday through Thursday, Feb. 24-26, lighter-than-air Brazilian vocalist **ASTRUD GILBERTO;** and Friday, Feb. 27, Dominican saxophonist **MARIO RIVERA & THE SALSA REFUGEES.** Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, *and from eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.* Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A bustling knotty-pine-and-brick-walled jazz room. Tenor saxophonist **ARCHIE SHEPP** directs a quintet through Sunday, Feb. 22, and on Tuesday, Feb. 24, a sextet composed of **HAROLD LAND** (tenor saxophone), **BOBBY HUTCHERSON** (vibes), **CURTIS FULLER** (trombone), **CEDAR WALTON** (piano), **BUSTER WILLIAMS** (bass), and **BILLY HIGGINS** (drums) *begins a six-night residence.* **GIL EVANS'** shimmering, electrified orchestra continues to hold forth on Mondays. Music from about ten. Dining.

TRAMPS, 125 E. 15th St. (777-5077)—A simple basic blues and rock club, now a venerable ten years old. Wednesday, Feb. 18, Paintbox and Phantom Five; Thursday, Feb. 19, Birdsongs of the Mesozoic and Willie (Loco) Alexander; Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21, Loup Gurou, a zydeco band; Sunday, Feb. 22, Philly Gumbo; Monday, Feb. 23, Jolie Blonde; Tuesday, Feb. 24, the Nervous Kind and Figure Life Out; and Friday and Saturday, Feb. 27-28, **BUSTER (BEAUREGARD) POINDEXTER & THE BANSHEES OF BLUE,** who will play some New Orleans-style music in honor of Mardi Gras. Shows after nine-thirty.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—The Terrace Bar features a little fireplace, in which little urban fires sometimes burn, and reliable—sometimes incandescent—piano-bass teams. *Pianist, singer, and Ellington* scholar **BROOKS KERR** pursues the truth with bassist **AL HALL** every night but Monday, when pianist **JUNIOR MANCE** is on duty. On Tuesdays, Messrs. Kerr and Hall trade sets with jazz harpist **DAPHNE HELLMAN'S** trio. Music from around ten.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Perhaps the most famous basement in the world, now in its second half century, has been described by Max Gordon, the wise, elfin, cigar-smoking proprietor, as "a good joint that people like to come to—thank God." The reason people have been coming here on Monday nights for the past twenty-one years is the seventeen-piece orchestra led by the light-fingered drummer **MEL LEWIS**—one of the best mainstream big bands in the world. The band is beginning its twenty-second season by performing every night through Monday, Feb. 23. On Tuesday, Feb. 24, pocket trumpeter, doussn' gouni player, and free spirit **DON CHERRY** will descend the stairs with his sextet. Music from ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Past the steam tables of piping-hot student food, beyond the pinball machines and the jukebox (now an accessory to the video screen above it) is a room full of jazz and comedy. **DAKOTA STATON** sings with pianist **BROSS TOWNSEND'S** trio through Sunday, Feb. 22, and on Wednesday, Feb. 25, veteran blues and boogie-woogie pianist **SAMMY PRICE** moves in with his combo. Mondays are comedy nights. Music from about nine.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A bright, spacious bar and restaurant with an in-between room from which music issues, putting an end to some discussions and inspiring others. Pianist **JANE JARVIS** works with bassist **MILT HINTON** on Wednesday, Feb. 18, and for six nights starting Monday, Feb. 23; with **MAJOR HOLLEY** on Thursday, Feb. 19; and with **JIMMY ROWSER** on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21. On Sundays, guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE,** a duo for over a decade, play quietly fervent, highly melodic, room-stilling jazz. Music weeknights from eight and Sundays from seven.

JAZZ / FOLK / ROCK CONCERTS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, ETC.

CECIL TAYLOR—Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Friday, Feb. 20, at 8.

NANA VASCONCELOS—Americas Society, Park Ave. at 68th St. 249-8950. Friday, Feb. 20, at 8.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

CHRIS ANDERSON TRIO—Jazz Cultural Theatre, Eighth Ave. between 28th and 29th Sts. 502-4300. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21, at 10, 11:30, and 1.

MILLIE JACKSON AND THE MANHATTANS—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8 and midnight.

MUSIC FROM IRELAND—With Mick Moloney, Robbie O'Connell, and others. (Weill Recital Hall. Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8:30.)

SIMON SHAHEEN & THE NEAR EASTERN MUSIC ENSEMBLE—Uris Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 81st St. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2:30. For information about tickets, call 206-1050.

ODETTA AND ELIZABETH (LIBBA) COTTEN—Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 690-4100. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 3.

HEAVENLY JAZZ CONCERT SERIES—The Jon Faddis quintet, with Clark Terry. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 5. For information about tickets, call 369-8040.)

KODO AND SOH DAIKO—Two Japanese *taiko* drumming troupes. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Tuesday, Feb. 24, and Thursday, Feb. 26, at 8.)

AMERICAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA—With Benny Carter, in a program of his music. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Thursday, Feb. 26, at 8. For information about tickets, call 529-5694.)

FREDDIE JACKSON—With Ray, Goodman, and Brown. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Thursday, Feb. 26, at 8, and Friday, Feb. 27, at 7:30.)

NEW YORK COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA—Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Thursday and Friday, Feb. 26-27, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concerts.

PAUL WINTER CONSORT AND PÉ-DE-BOI—In a carnival celebration, with the On the Lam Street Band, dancers, clowns, puppets, and stilt walkers. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Friday, Feb. 27, at 8, and Saturday, Feb. 28, at 2 and 8.)

ANDREW CYRILLE, HENRY THREADGILL, AND FRED HOPKINS—Greenwich House. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8 and 10. Tickets at the door on the night of the concerts.

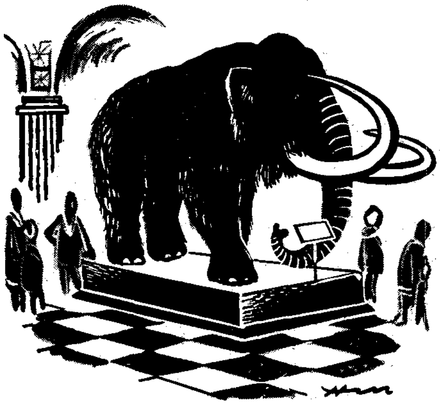
PAQUITO D'RIVERA AND NEW YORK STRINGS—Weill Recital Hall. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8:30.

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

BENNY ANDREWS—Works on paper, dating from 1983 to the present. Through March 6. (Lubin House Gallery, 11 E. 61st St. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)



PETER BOOTH—New paintings and works on paper by an Australian artist who has been included in international-survey shows at the Modern and at the Guggenheim. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (CDS Gallery, 13 E. 75th St. Open Mondays.)

THOM COONEY CRAWFORD—Totemic bronzes eight and nine feet tall. Through March 10. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

MARIANNE ENGBERG / MARION KENYON JONES—Pinhole photographs of China. / Abstractions on paper mounted on canvas. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Urdang, 23 E. 74th St.)

ADOLPH GOTTLIEB (1903-74)—Fourteen pictographic paintings. Through March 5. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

JAN GREEN / GARY HALL—Impressionist paintings of birds in flight. / Paintings of scullers moving down a river—tributes to Eakins. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (ACA, 21 E. 67th St.)

KEVIN MOSS—A painting of Central Park at dusk, among other landscapes. Through March 21. (Fourcade, 36 E. 75th St.)

ODD NERDRUM—New realist paintings. Through March 28. (Hamilton, 19 E. 71st St.)

STEPHEN PACE—Loosely painted scenes of Indiana farm life as the artist remembers it *from his childhood. Through March 4.* (Perlow, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

DAVID PARK (1911-60)—Paintings, mostly from the fifties. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Salander-O'Reilly, 22 E. 80th St. Open Mondays.)

BILL SPIRA—Abstract wood-and-stoneware sculptures. Through March 7. (Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St.)

MARINA STERN—Pastels of still-lifes and of landscapes seen through windows. Through Thursday, Feb. 26. (Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

PAUL WONNER—As if to leave no doubt about his high regard for still-life painting, the artist is showing (among others) one work with at least two dozen vases of flowers, and another that is a portrait of himself painting a still-life. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **AMERICAS SOCIETY** (formerly known as the Center for Inter-American Relations), Park Ave. at 68th St.: Modern Latin-American art from the Nancy Sayles Day Collection, owned by the Rhode Island School of Design. Through April 5. (Daily, except Mondays, noon to 6.) . . . **HUNTER COLLEGE GALLERY,** Lexington Ave. at 68th St.: "Race and Representation" addresses the issues of racism and political oppression in a show of paintings, videos, and works in other mediums by Pat Ward Williams, Roy DeCarava, Jenny Holzer, and others. Through March 6. (Opens at 1.) . . . **KOUROS,** 23 E. 73rd St.: John Bernard Myers has chosen an exhibit of paintings and sculptures, mostly abstract works, by eleven contemporary artists. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. . . . **PRAKAPAS,** 19 E. 71st St.: Prints by Bauhaus members (Feininger, Albers, Klee) and by other artists the Bauhaus published (Léger, de Chirico). Through March 21. (Opens at noon.) . . . **SCHLESINGER-BOISANTÉ,** 822 Madison Ave., at 69th St.: Abstract paintings *from the thirties and forties by Byron* Browne, Fritz Bultman, Harry Holtzman, Charles Seliger, and Robert Jay Wolff. Through March 12.

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

LESLIE BOHNENKAMP / JUDITH ROTHSCHILD—An installation of horn-shaped paper sculptures. Through March 7. / Abstract relief paintings. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Gimpel, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

ALAN COTE—Recent abstract paintings and drawings. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Washburn, 41 E. 57th St.)

ENRICO DONATI—Surrealist paintings and objects from the forties, most of them on exhibition for the first time. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

KENNETH EVETT—Realist paintings of still-lifes with nature scenes in the backgrounds.

"Sometimes I wonder if people have a primal, instinctive craving for hamburgers. Something hot and juicy and so utterly simple you can eat it with your hands. I mean, I know some people who don't eat burgers. But I'm not sure I trust them."

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Preparation: 10 min. Cooking time: 7 min.

Mix 1 lb. extra lean ground beef, 2 Tbs. minced onion, 1 Tbs. coarse grain mustard, ½ tsp. each dried basil, oregano, thyme, ground cumin, cracked black pepper and salt. Divide into 4 equal portions, form into patties. Broil 7 min., turning once. Split 4 egg twist buns, place a lettuce leaf, burger, tomato and onion slice on each bun. 4 servings.

Total Calories = 388 Calories from beef = 217

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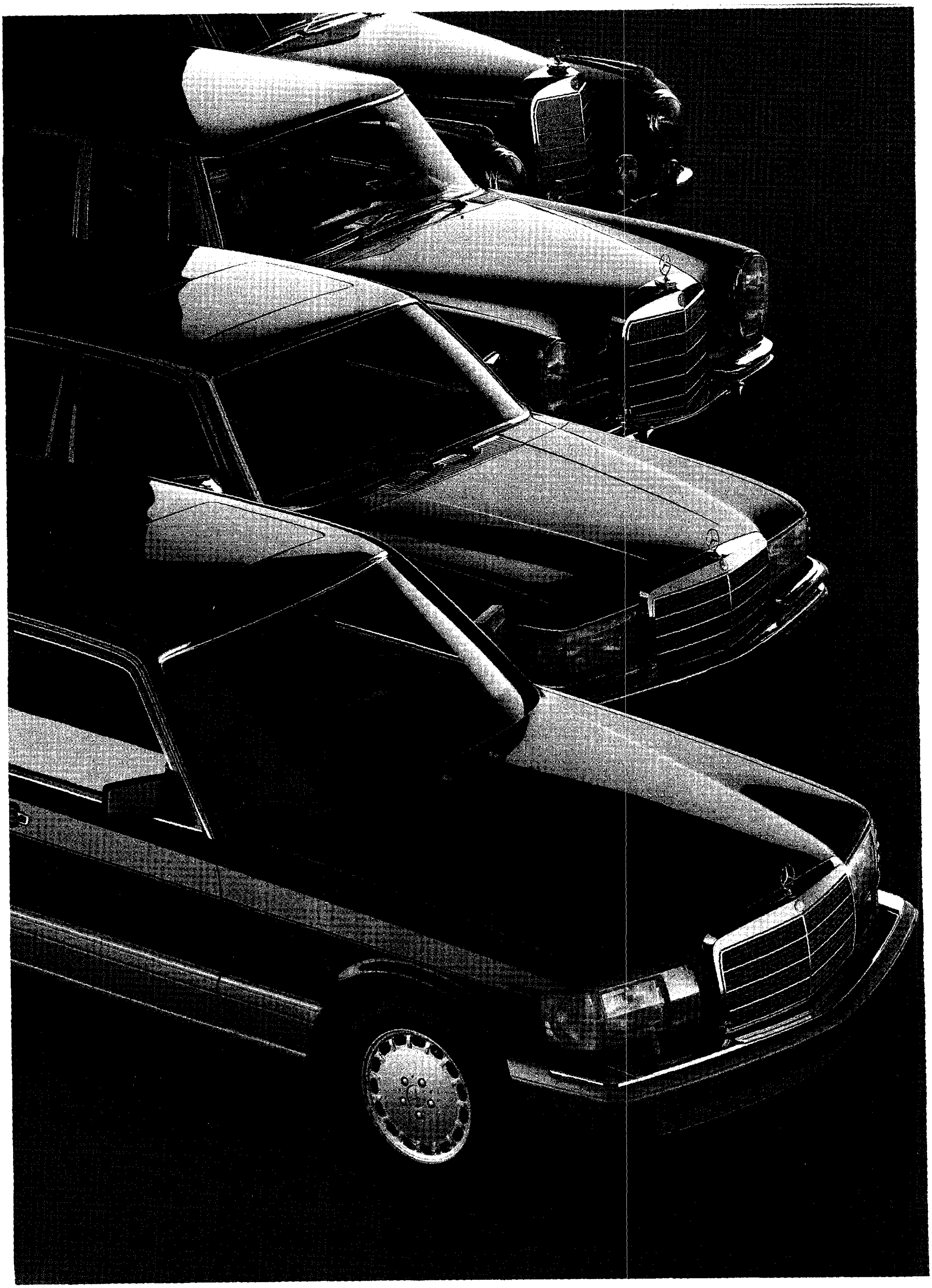
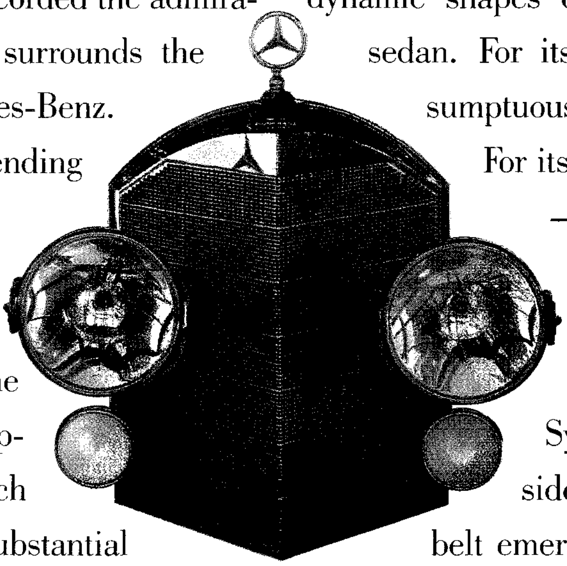


THE MERCEDES-BENZ S-CLASS AND THE MYSTIQUE OF THE "BIG MERCEDES."



From era to era over the decades, few automobile series have been accorded the admiration verging on awe that surrounds the premier sedans of Mercedes-Benz.

Shown in descending order at left are examples dating from 1955 to 1963 to 1972 to the 1987 S-Class sedan in the foreground. The "big Mercedes," they are popularly called. Not so much in tribute to their size—substantial but never excessive—as to their prowess. Powerful in a silky way, baronially comfortable rather than garishly luxurious, a big Mercedes manages to blend the dignity of a limousine with what one journal terms "the innate ability to leap yawning stretches of landscape in single, effortless bounds." The big sedan as marathoner, in brief. With the stamina to endlessly devour the miles on any highway in the world, at a pace that might exhaust the drivers of lesser cars. If not the cars themselves.

A big Mercedes of any era is remarkable. The current series, the S-Class, is the most remarkable yet. For its choice of three models, crowned by the 5.6-liter gasoline V-8 560 SEL. For one of the slipperiest aerodynamic shapes ever bestowed on a large sedan. For its library quiet within 100 sumptuous cubic feet of living space. For its brilliant use of electronics—to activate its Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), for example. And to deploy its Supplemental Restraint System (SRS)—with driver's-side air bag and front seat belt emergency tensioning retractors—within a fraction of a second of a major frontal impact.

And at root, it represents Mercedes-Benz: no mere assemblage of trendy technological hardware but a specimen of automotive integrity. In every seam and sinew, in every glossy inch of its hand-rubbed finish.

To drive an S-Class sedan is to partake of one of the timeless motoring traditions. More important, it is to experience a synthesis of high performance and high refinement matched by no other automobile.

Engineered like no other car in the world

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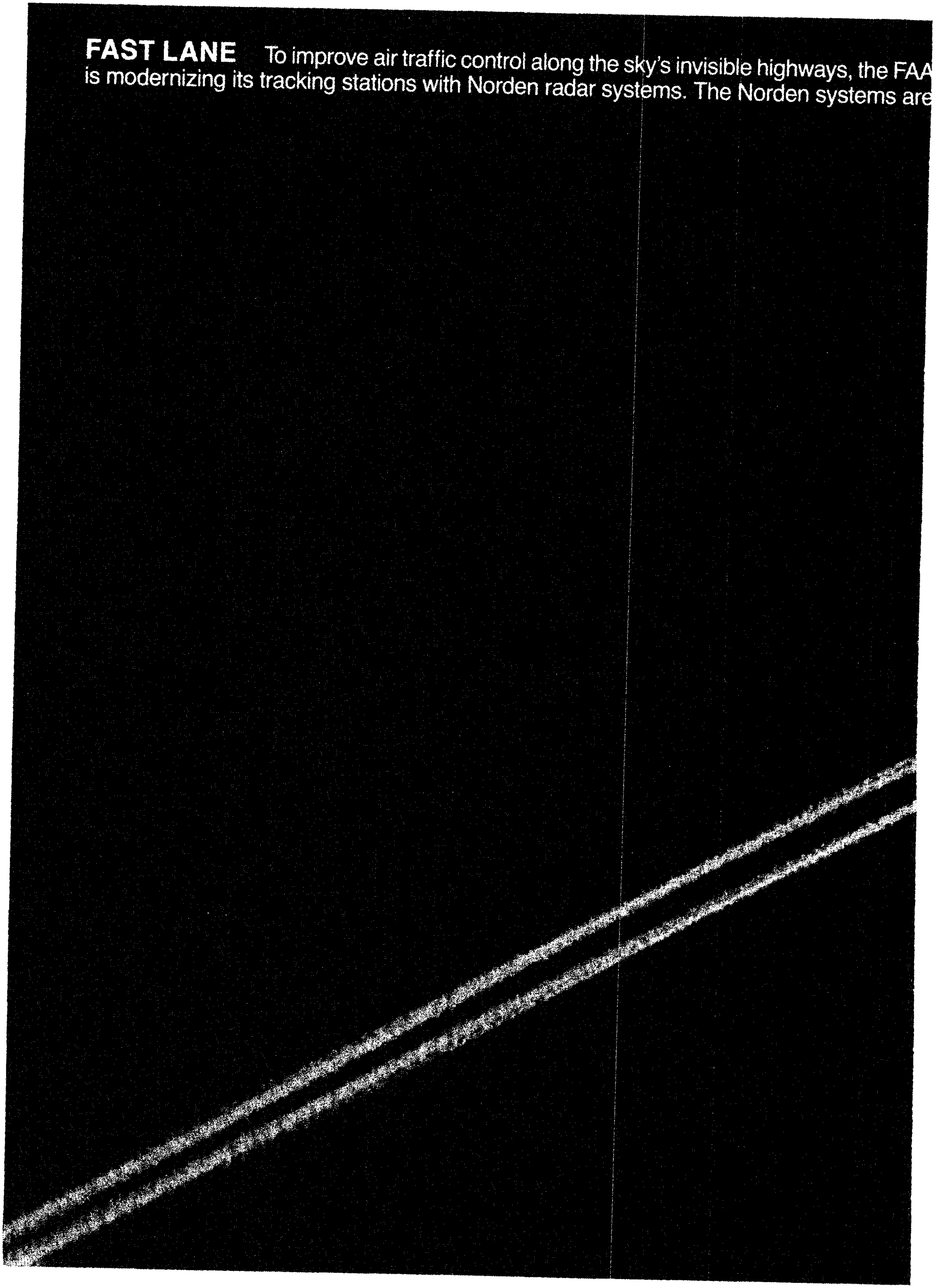
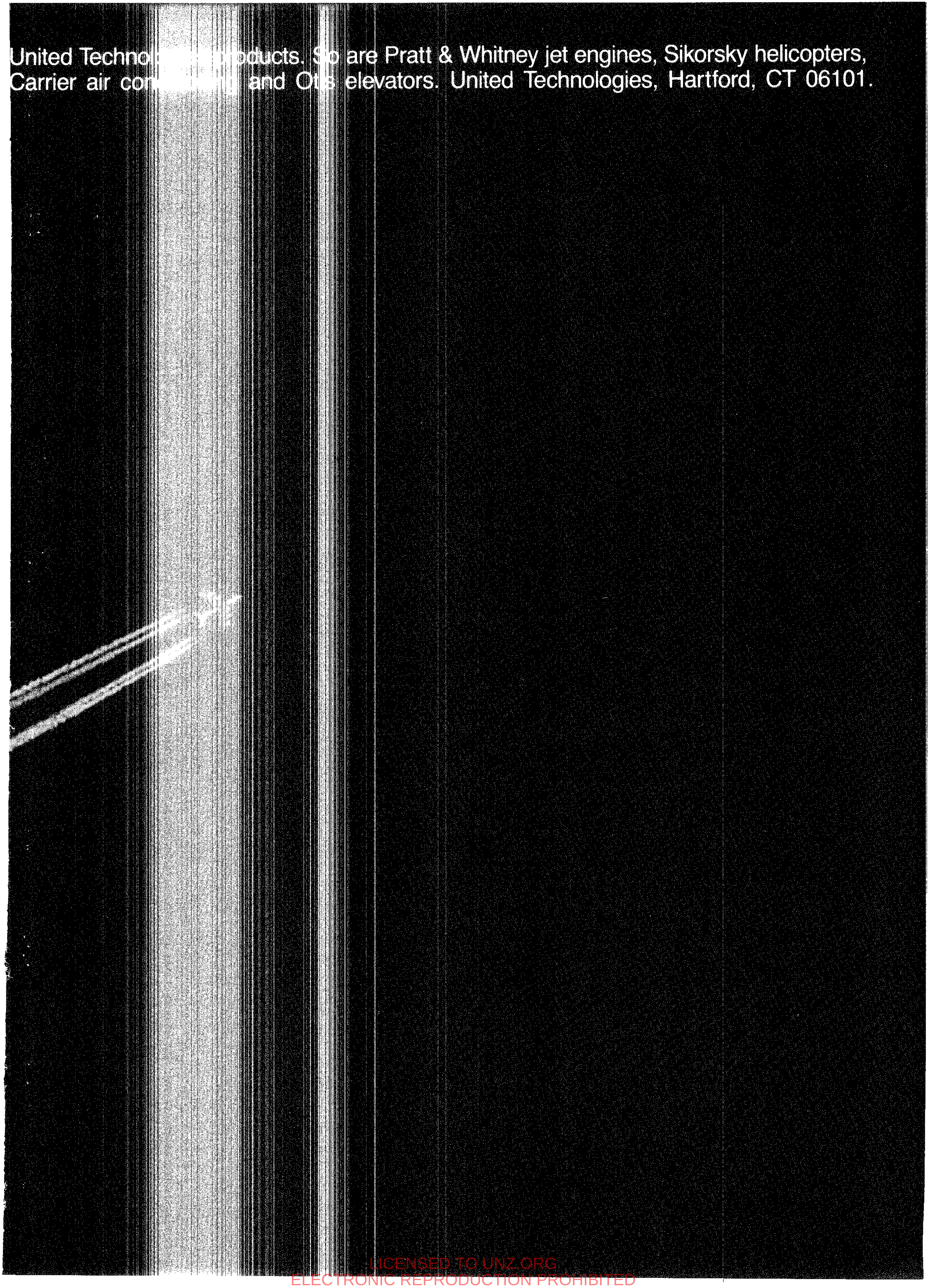
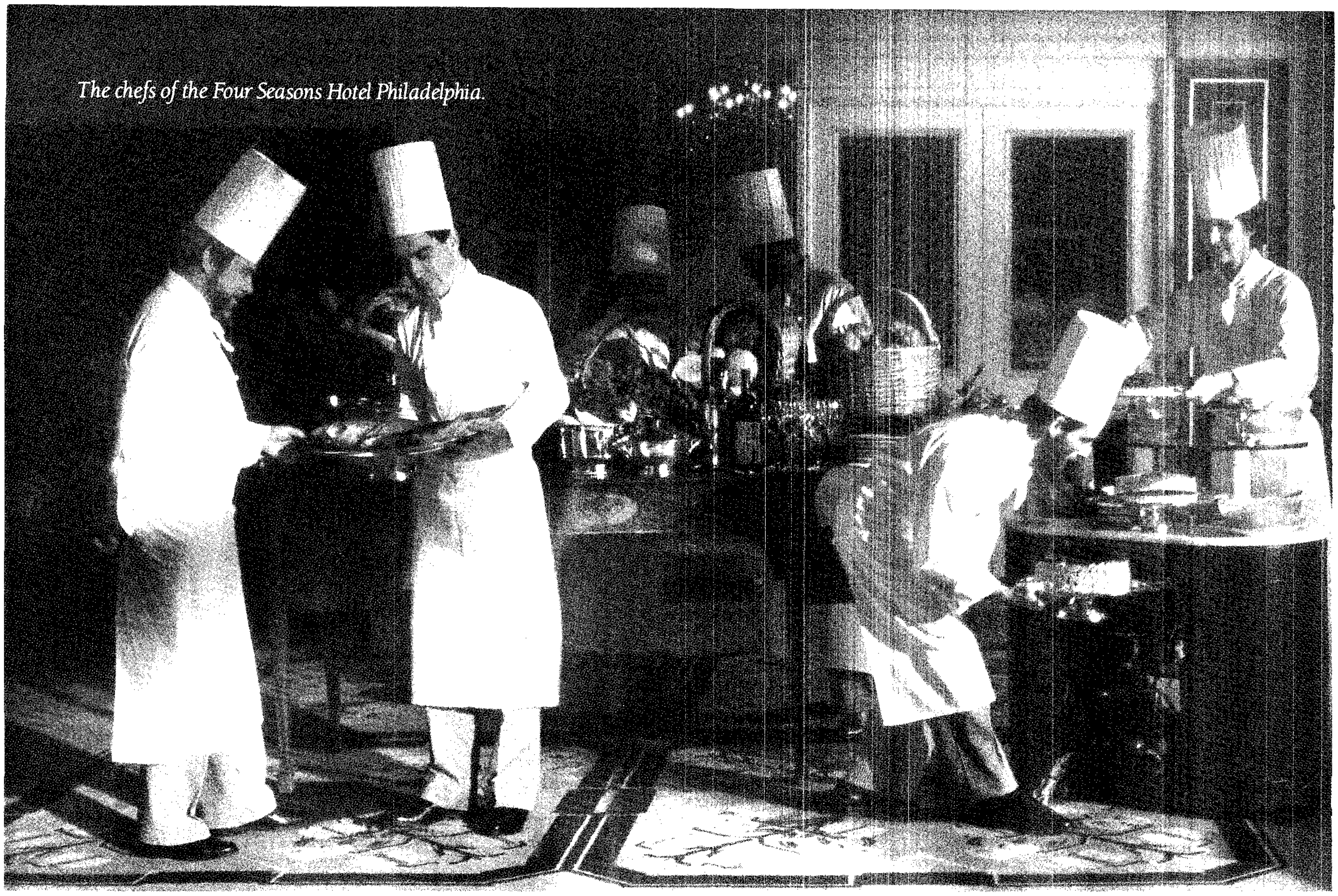


FAST LANE To improve air traffic control along the sky's invisible highways, the FAA is modernizing its tracking stations with Norden radar systems. The Norden systems are



United Techno[illegible] products. So are Pratt & Whitney jet engines, Sikorsky helicopters, Carrier air co[illegible] and Otis elevators. United Technologies, Hartford, CT 06101.



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Through March 7. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Janet Fish—New paintings. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

David Fredenthal (1914-58)—Densely organized paintings of city scenes and landscapes. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

Nancy Hagin / Maurice Grosser (1903-86)—Realist still-lifes. / Maine landscapes and still-lifes painted in the artist's last two years. Through Wednesday, Feb. 25. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

Raymond Han—Still-life paintings. Through March 4. (Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St.)

Stanley William Hayter / Daniel Bennett Schwartz—New paintings and works on paper. / Small landscapes of Provence. Through March 4. (Armstrong, 50 W. 57th St.)

James Hennessey—Imaginary interiors and inscrutable figures rendered naïvely in thin oil paint. Through March 7. (Pearl, 38 E. 57th St.)

Roni Horn—Recent abstract drawings combining pastels, powdered pigments, and varnish. Through March 21. (Galerie Maeght Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Bill Jacklin / Hugh O'Donnell—Oils, pastels, and works on paper of New York bustle by a British artist who moved here a year ago to a studio in the meat-packing district. / Irregularly shaped canvas and wood paintings and works on paper. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Reginald Marsh (1898-1954) / **Bernard Stern**—Paintings of forties-era urban activities. / Large paintings with insect motifs and with textures derived from mixing oil and acrylic paint. Through Wednesday, Feb. 25. (Deutsch, 20 W. 57th St.)

John McLaughlin (1898-1976) / **John Graham** (1881-1961)—Paintings of rectangular shapes. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. / Drawings. Through March 7. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

James B. Moore—Representational still-lifes painted in muted colors. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Ed Paschke—A two-gallery exhibit of new works. Through March 7. (Luhring Augustine & Hodes, 41 E. 57th St., and Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Giuseppe Penone—A crumbling deciduous tree in bronze (with a few vestiges of bronze foliage), among other works. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Jane Rosen—Painted gypsum-cement sculptures with subjects from nature (herons, for instance) reduced to their basic forms. Also, drawings. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Works on paper by Jean Arp are in the front gallery.)

José María Sicilia—New abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Carl Nicholas Titolo—Small works in mixed mediums reflecting his travels in Italy. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Robin Utterback—Collage paintings, painted-wood constructions, and works on paper. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Robert Warrens—Large-scale fantasy landscapes plus two painted-wood constructions related to the paintings. Through Thursday, Feb. 26. (Frumkin, 50 W. 57th St.)

Lynton Wells / Doug Ohlson—Large canvases in which figures or objects are well defined even though they are seen through a barrage of cross-hatching. / Geometric paintings in hot colors. Through Saturday, Feb. 21. (Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Folk Art of This Century—Paintings from the United States, France, Haiti, and Yugoslavia. The artists include John Kane, Henri Rousseau, Hector Hyppolite, Dragan Gazi, and Minnie Evans. Through March 28. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At the ASSOCIATED AMERICAN ARTISTS, 20 W. 57th St.: Prints by artists in the Woodstock community in the first half of this century, among them Minna Citron, Adolf Dehn, George Bellows, and Yasuo Kuniyoshi. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. . . . TILTON, 24 W. 57th St.: Geometric abstractions by Carolus Enckell; large, almost monochromatic landscapes by Joellen Hall, with birds and other animals painted in white contour over dark backgrounds; and small pattern drawings by Ruth Vollmer from late in her life. Through Saturday, Feb. 28.

GALLERIES—SoHo

William Anastasi / Matthew McCaslin—Oils depicting components of Joyce's hundred-and-nineteen-letter word describing a thunderclap in "Finnegans Wake." / Wall sculptures utilizing Formica made to look like stone, metal, or wood. Through March 11. (Cutler, 164 Mercer St.)

Andrea Belag—Abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Davis, 568 Broadway.)

Ross Bleckner—New paintings. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Mel Bochner—A show that ranges from early conceptual works to recent big geometric paintings. Through March 7. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Vivian E. Browne / Carol Galligan—Paintings of sequoia forests. / Painted-paper sculptures. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (SoHo 20, at 469 Broome St. Opens at noon.)

Peter Dean—Landscape paintings and paintings from a series called "Personal Events." Through March 7. (Semaphore, 137 Greene St.)

Peter Drake—Paintings and drawings. Through March 4. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Vernon Fisher—New works, including a large sheet of slate on which the artist has sketched (in chalk) anatomical views of muscles and painted (in oil) a parachute dropping into the sea. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Jack Forsell / Michael Mogavero—Figures, cityscapes, and objects both painted and real crowd large three-dimensional collage paintings. / All-over still-life canvases preoccupied with lamps. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Oscarsson Siegeltuch, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St.)

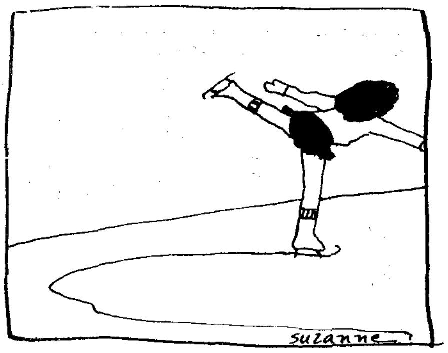
Judith Godwin—Abstract Expressionist paintings. Through March 7. (Ingber, 415 West Broadway.)

Willy Heeks—Recent abstract paintings and works on paper. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Beitzel, 113 Greene St.)

Robert Helm—Paintings depicting birds, dogs, figures, and wood, the last echoed in intricate inlaid-wood frames. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Jasper Johns—Four paintings from a series entitled "The Seasons," and related drawings. Through March 7. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Mel Kendrick—Geometric sculptures: six in such woods as osage, padauk, and purpleheart, and four in bronze, each of the latter with a different patina. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)



George McNeil—Recent paintings. Through March 7. (Gruenebaum, 415 West Broadway.)

Richard Mock—New abstractions. Through March 4. (Esman, 70 Greene St.)

Maud Morgan—Handmade-paper works whose multicolored abstract patterns were created in the papermaking process. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Munroe, 415 West Broadway.)

Peter Nadin / Rudy Burckhardt—Paintings. / Photographs and photocollages. Through March 7. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St. Mr. Burckhardt has a complementary show of recent paintings at Blue Mountain, 121 Wooster St., which opens at noon. Through Wednesday, Feb. 25.)

Sharron Quasius / Howard Monath—Tiepolo might get a kick out of these soft-sculpture tableaux of some of his masterpieces. / Portraits of New York doormen in situ. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (O. K. Harris, 383 West Broadway.)

Milo Reice—New paintings and drawings. Through March 7. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Elaine Reichek / Patsy Norvell—An installation. / A new sculpture, plus models, drawings, and photographs for three public commissions. Through March 7. (A.I.R., 63 Crosby St. Miss Reichek is also showing large-scale photographs of South American Indians and knitted versions of the figures—also large scale—at the Lamagna Gallery, 50 W. 57th St. Through Saturday, Feb. 28.)

Todd Siler—Works demonstrating the possible connections between the brain and creative expression; e.g., a group of fourteen paintings with the artist's E.E.G. recordings spanning their length. Through March 14. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Steven Singer—Figurative sculptures made with scrap metal from the repair work being done on the Manhattan Bridge, which happens to be near the artist's studio. Through March 7. (Steinbaum, 132 Greene St.)

Mary Joan Waid—Landscapes and still-lifes that incorporate self-portraits—the artist's face seen in a hand mirror, for instance. Through Saturday, Feb. 21. (Einstein, 591 Broadway.)

Group Shows—At the CASTELLI, 142 Greene St.: Leo Castelli is marking his thirtieth year in the art business with some of the paintings and sculptures—by Cy Twombly, Lee Bontecou, Ellsworth Kelly, Richard Artschwager, and others—he put on exhibit in his first fifteen years. Through March 7. . . . 49TH PARALLEL, 420 West Broadway: A show entitled "The Idea of North," consisting of paintings, sculptures, and photographs based on ideas from a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation documentary produced by the late pianist Glenn Gould. All of the artists, among them Robert Frank, Agnes Martin, and Jackie Winsor, live in or have lived in Canada. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. . . . GIBSON, 568 Broadway: Abstract paintings by Alan Uglow, Susan Smith, Stephen Rosenthal, and Nancy Haynes. Through March 14. . . . GREEN, 152 Wooster St.: Drawings by sculptors Heide Fasnacht, Alain Kirili, Michael Gitlin, Carol Hepper, and Erik Levine. Through Saturday, Feb. 28.

OTHER GALLERIES

Buster Cleveland—Iconlike mosaics (images of Mao abound) made with fake pearls, rhinestone jewelry, photographs, and so forth, encapsulated in clear poured plastic. Through Sunday, Feb. 22. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, 167 Avenue A, at 10th St. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Kim Keever—Semi-abstract landscape paintings incorporating some symbols of measure—clocks, rulers. Through March 1. (M-13, at 413 E. 9th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Dennis Pohl—Paintings in mixed mediums. Through Thursday, Feb. 26. (Roerich, 319 W. 107th St. Daily, except Mondays, 2 to 5.)

Susan Rothenberg—Some of the horse paintings (1974-80) that attracted so much attention when they were first introduced. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Gagosian, 521 W. 23rd St., near Eleventh Ave.)

RANDAL RUPERT—Large-scale paintings in which pre-Columbian figures are seen in the foreground of New York City landscapes. Through March 8. (Casas Toledo Oosterom, 235 E. 4th St. Opens at 1:30 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

THERESE SCHWARTZ—Grid-patterned collage paintings. Through March 29. (Humphrey, 242 E. 5th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

MAURA SHEEHAN—A sculptural installation consisting of pairs of fragmented feet (some with sandals) reminiscent of classical statuary. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 to 6:30; Wednesdays, 10 to 8:30; Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 1 to 5.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **ARTISTS SPACE**, 223 West Broadway: Film, slide, and video installations by Anne Bray, Kendall Buster, John Knecht, Charles Long, and Carolee Schneeman. Through March 14. . . . **BURGIN**, 270 Lafayette St.: Recent paintings and photographic works by Fariba Hajamadi, Gerhard Merz, and James Welling. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. . . . **LOEB STUDENT CENTER**, New York University, Washington Sq. S. and LaGuardia Pl.: The eleventh annual "Small Works" exhibition, selected by Barbara Toll. Through Friday, Feb. 27. . . . **MASTER EAGLE GALLERY**, sixth floor, 40 W. 25th St.: "Cartoon '87," drawings by approximately forty artists, including Liza Donnelly, Tim Haggerty, Ed Arno, Sam Gross, and Lou Myers. Through March 20. (Mondays through Fridays, 9:30 to 4:30.) . . . **P.S. 1**, at 46-01 21st St., Long Island City: "Art with Community" is the title of an exhibit of all kinds of works produced, on the one hand, by artists in collaboration with others (Deborah Ossoff worked with senior citizens in Far Rockaway) or, on the other, by artists who used a community as their subject (Agnes Zellin photographed shoppers in malls and celebrators at religious festivals in Astoria, Queens). Through March 22. (Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.) . . . **VISUAL ARTS MUSEUM**, 209 E. 23rd St.: Works by contemporary still-life painters Mark Innerst, Michele Owings, Rex Lau, and others. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Mondays through Thursdays, 9 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 4.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ALVIN LANGDON COBURN (1882-1966) / **RENÉ BURRI**—Among the hundred or so prints are portraits of Henry James, Auguste Rodin, and others, made for the artist's 1913 book called "Men of Mark." / Color prints documenting the American space program. Through Sunday, Feb. 22. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

JIMMY DE SANA—Dada-inspired photographs. Through March 8. (Hearn, 735 E. 9th St., just west of Avenue D. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

WILLIAM EGGLESTON—Color photographs, almost all of which were in a show at the Modern in 1976. Through March 7. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St.)

DAVID A. HANSON—Salt prints of the entire course of the Hudson River and its environs, all but a few of which look as though they were from a hundred years ago rather than the present. Through March 12. (Pfeifer, 568 Broadway.)

LOTTE JACOBI—Vintage prints by a ninety-one-year-old photographer known for her portraits. Through March 21. (Photofind, 138 Spring St.)

JACQUES HENRI LARTIGUE (1894-1986)—The Museum of Modern Art has mounted a show devoted to this photographer, entitled "Panoramas of the Twenties." See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

DUANE MICHALS—New works, primarily silver prints, some with text, some painted. Through March 7. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

HELMUT NEWTON—Photographs from the late seventies and early eighties. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Staley-Wise, 177 Prince St. Opens at noon.)

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GORDON PARKS—A retrospective of more than two hundred prints by this photojournalist. Through March 28. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Fifty prints made for the Farm Security Administration. Through March 28. (Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St. Mondays through Wednesdays, noon to 8; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

VAL TELBERG / **ED BURTYNSKY**—Photocollages using vintage prints, photocopies of the prints, and drawings. / Color prints of British Columbia and the Western United States. Through Saturday, Feb. 28. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

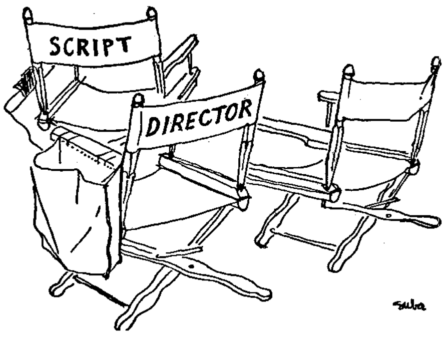
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The museum's collection of twentieth-century art (paintings, sculptures, photographs, and objects by industrial and decorative designers), a great deal of it acquired in the past five years, has gone on permanent exhibition in the new Lila Acheson Wallace Wing, a string of twenty-two galleries on three levels (a fourth—a sculpture garden—will open in June) in the southwest corner of the building. . . . ¶ "Van Gogh in Saint-Rémy and Auvers," a show of paintings and drawings covering the artist's last fifteen months. Through March 22. . . . ¶ "Dance" is the title of the Costume Institute's show of men's and women's evening dress and accessories. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective show of works by Paul Klee. Through May 5. (On Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 8, Pierre Boulez will speak on "Klee's Influence on a Musician," in the Titus Theatre I. The Klee exhibition will be open *from 6 to 8 to those attending the talk; for information about tickets, call 708-9795.*) . . . ¶ A small show of sculptures by Joel Otterson. Through March 3. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY**: Prints by Jacques Henri Lartigue. Through March 24. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A small show (only nine paintings) is the main reason for a visit just now, while the museum mounts a large exhibit of works by Pierre Alechinsky which will start Friday, Feb. 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5. . . . **NOTE**: Hanne Tierney will give three performances of "Salomé," Oscar Wilde's 1892 symbolist play. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21, at 8, and Sunday, Feb. 22, at 3. Tickets at the door at performance times.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A show of paintings by David Salle, spanning the past eight years. Through March 29. . . . ¶ A retrospective of works by John Storrs, an early modernist sculptor, containing, in addition to sculptures, his paintings, drawings, and prints. Through March 22. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)



BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—A retrospective of works on paper by abstractionist Cleve Gray. Some of the early work is figurative. Through Monday, Feb. 23. (Open daily except Tuesdays. Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—Handmade fine- and applied-art objects in a blazing show that befits a new home for this museum. Through March 22. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—The accomplishments of the architect Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926), seen in the context of the work of his peers in Barcelona, are the focus of an exhibit, which has architectural drawings, furniture, tiles, metalwork, and glass objects. . . . ¶ A display of folding fans (pleated and *brisé*) which documents their design and function at the height of their popularity (late seventeenth century to early twentieth). Through May 31. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—A display elucidating the European tradition of mounting rare Japanese and Chinese porcelains with gold, silver, and gilt bronze. Through March 1. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—Etchings and lithographs by Jakob Steinhardt (1887-1968), a German Expressionist whose themes included Jewish religious life. Through April 19. (Open daily except Fridays and Saturdays. Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—"The Age of Bruegel: Netherlandish Drawings of the Sixteenth Century," a selection built around the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Eight of the drawings are by him, the others by artists who influenced him (Bosch, for instance) and whom he influenced (Roelandt Savery). Through April 5. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM, 144 W. 125th St.—"Harlem Renaissance: Art of Black America," a show of two hundred paintings, sculptures, photographs, and prints, nearly all of them by five pivotal artists of the twenties—Aaron Douglas, William H. Johnson, Palmer Hayden, Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, and James Van DerZee. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6. . . . ¶ A good complement to this exhibit is at the Baruch College Gallery, 135 E. 22nd St., which has on display works from the twenties and thirties by black artists. These are on loan from the Schomburg Center. Through March 2. The hours at the college are Mondays through Fridays, noon to 5, and Thursday evenings until 7.)

ART AFTER DARK

(Performance, music, dance, video, film, and combinations thereof.)

FRANKLIN FURNACE, 112 Franklin St. 925-4671—Laurie Beth Clark (performance), Thursday and Friday, Feb. 19-20, at 8:30.

THE KITCHEN, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793—Music programs—Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 9: Carol Emanuel's Verde and John King. . . . ¶ Thursday, Feb. 19, at 9: Jean-Michel Basquiat and Hal Wilner. . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 20, at 9: Steve Beresford and Yomo Toro. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 21, at 9: Ramm-Ell-Zee and Shockdell, and the Tim Berne Quintet. . . . ¶ Wednesday through Sunday, Feb. 25-March 1, at 8:30: David Cale in a performance work called "Smooch Music."

P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288—Steve Gross (dance), Friday through Sunday, Feb. 20-22, at 9; Yvonne Meier (dance), Friday through Sunday, Feb. 27-March 1, at 9.

Note—"Cross Way Cross," a performance work by Linda Mussmann, with eight dancers and four musicians. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 26-28, at 8:30, and a daytime performance on Sunday, March 1, at 3. For tickets, call 741-1032.)

MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 427-4410. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 8: "Manon," with Catherine Malfitano, Neil Shicoff, David Holloway, and Ferruccio Furlanetto; conducted by Manuel Rosenthal. . . . ¶ Thursday, Feb. 19, at 8: "La Clemenza di Tito," with Carol Vaness, Diana Montague, Ariel Bybee, and John Alexander; James Levine. . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 20, at 8: "Carmen," with Agnes Baltsa, Leona Mitchell, José Carreras, and Samuel Ramey; James Levine. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 21, at 1: "Der Rosenkavalier," with Elisabeth Söderström, Barbara Hendricks, Brigitte Fassbaender, and Artur Korn; Jeffrey Tate. (A nonsubscription performance.) . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8: "Manon," with Catherine Malfitano, Neil Shicoff, David Holloway, and Ferruccio Furlanetto; Manuel Rosenthal. (A nonsubscription performance.) . . . ¶ Monday, Feb. 23, at 8: "Boris Godunov," with Stefka Mineva, Vladimir Popov, Robert Nagy, Martti Talvela, and Paul Plishka; James Conlon. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 8: "Carmen," with Agnes Baltsa, Leona Mitchell, José Carreras, and Samuel Ramey; James Levine. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 8: "Manon," with Catherine Malfitano, Neil Shicoff, David Holloway, and Ferruccio Furlanetto; Manuel Rosenthal. . . . ¶ Thursday, Feb. 26, at 7: "Die Walküre," with Hildegard Behrens, Brigitte Fassbaender, Peter Hofmann, and Simon Estes; James Levine. . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 27, at 8: "Boris Godunov," with Stefka Mineva, Vladimir Popov, Robert Nagy, Martti Talvela, and Paul Plishka; James Conlon. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 28, at 1:30: "Manon," with Catherine Malfitano, Neil Shicoff, David Holloway, and Ferruccio Furlanetto; Manuel Rosenthal. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8: "Carmen," with Agnes Baltsa, Leona Mitchell, José Carreras, and Samuel Ramey; James Levine. (A nonsubscription performance.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. Krzysztof Penderecki and Maxim Shostakovich conducting a Penderecki-Haydn-Tchaikovsky program on Thursday and Friday, Feb. 19-20, at 8 (both with Mstislav Rostropovich, cello). . . . ¶ Maxim Shostakovich conducting a Britten-Bernstein-Shostakovich program on Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8, and Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 7:30 (both, again, with Mr. Rostropovich). . . . ¶ Leonard Slatkin conducting Mahler's arrangement of Beethoven's "Coriolanus" Overture, and works by Gordon Jacob and Shostakovich, on Thursday, Feb. 26, at 8; Friday, Feb. 27, at 2; and Saturday, Feb. 28, and Tuesday, March 3, at 8 (all with Philip Myers, horn).

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra—Kazimierz Kord conducting, with Misha Dichter, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Thursday, Feb. 19, at 8.)

Academy of Ancient Music—Christopher Hogwood conducting, with Christophe Coin, cello. (Avery Fisher Hall. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 7:30.)

Salzburg Musici—Oswald Sallaberger conducting, with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, violin. (Carnegie Hall. Monday, Feb. 23, at 8.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Erich Leinsdorf conducting, with Radu Lupu, piano, and the Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 8.)

Mannes Orchestra—Yakov Kreizberg conducting, with vocal soloists and Kyung-Won Rim, cello. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th

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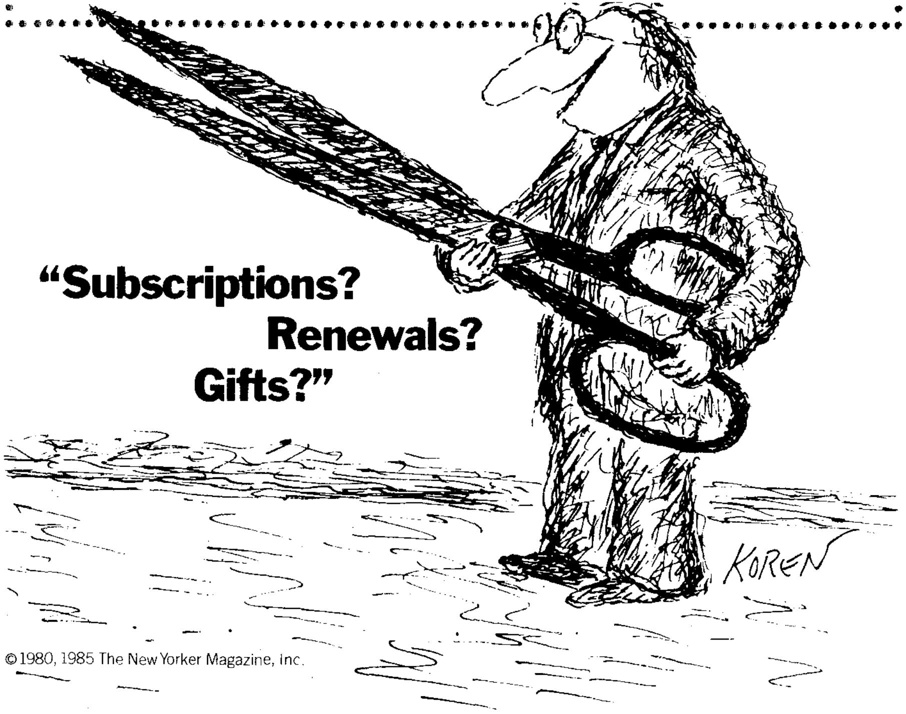
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St. Thursday, Feb. 19, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

New York Pops—A two-part concert: Skitch Henderson conducting a tribute to Frank Loesser, with Jo Sullivan; followed by Richard Hayman conducting a program that will include one of his own compositions. (Carnegie Hall. Friday, Feb. 20, at 8.)

New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra—Robert Black conducting, with the Leonardo Trio. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Friday, Feb. 20, at 8.)

Hartt School of Music Symphony Orchestra—Yehudi Menuhin conducting Beethoven's "Coriolanus" Overture and his Ninth Symphony, with soloists and the Hartt Choral Ensemble. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, Feb. 21, at 3.)

American Composers Orchestra—John Nelson conducting, with Johanna Meier, soprano; Joseph Passaro, timpani; and Janet Lyman Hill, viola d'amore. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 3.)

Opera Orchestra of New York—Eve Queler directing concert versions of the concluding scenes from Wagner's four Ring Cycle operas, with Eva Marton, soprano; Reiner Goldberg, tenor; and Roger Roloff, bass. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 7:30.)

Clarion Concerts Orchestra—Newell Jenkins conducting, with Igor Kipnis, harpsichord, and Benjamin Hudson, violin. (Alice Tully Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 8.)

Juilliard Orchestra—James DePreist conducting. (Avery Fisher Hall. Friday, Feb. 27, at 8. Free tickets available at the box office.)

Ensemble for Early Music's Grande Bande—Frederick Renz conducting and acting as harpsichord soloist for a program of baroque music. Also with Julianne Baird, soprano; David Hart, transverse flute; and the Boyquire. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8.)

Amor Artis Chorale and Orchestra—Johannes Somary directing Handel's oratorio "Esther," with Julianne Baird, soprano; Doreen Walker, alto; Grayson Hirst, tenor; Patrick Romano, tenor; and John Ostendorf, bass. (Alice Tully Hall. Friday, Feb. 27, at 8.)

New York Choral Society—Robert DeCormier directing Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana" and Paul Alan Levi's "Mark Twain Suite." With an orchestra and soloists. (Carnegie Hall. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8.)

RECITALS

Placido Domingo—Tenor, with Christopher Parkening, classical guitarist; the New York City Opera Orchestra, John De Main conducting; and others. (Avery Fisher Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 8.)

Tashi—With Lukas Foss, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 8.)

Deller Consort—A program of early vocal music, mostly, but also including twentieth-century French songs. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium. Thursday, Feb. 19, at 8.)

Waverly Consort—Iberian music from the Renaissance. (Alice Tully Hall. Thursday, Feb. 19, and Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8.)

Composers' Forum—Presenting the première performance of "When the Berries Fell," a chamber opera by Amina Claudine Myers. Miss Myers will direct, sing, and play the piano and organ. With a vocal choir and percussion accompaniment. (Triplex Theatre, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980. Friday, Feb. 20, at 8.)

American String Quartet—With Robert McDonald, piano. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music. Broadway at 122nd St. Friday, Feb. 20, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Music from Japan—A recital of contemporary music for the shō, a Japanese panpipe, played by Mayumi Miyata, accompanied by Susan Jolles, harp. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. Saturday, Feb. 21, at 5.)

Cambridge Chamber Players—Chamber music. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Saturday, Feb. 21, at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Roberta Peters—Soprano, with Yakov Kreizberg, piano, and Paul Dunkel, flute. (92nd Street Y, Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8.)

Orlando Quartet—With Lilian Kallir, piano. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium. Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8.)

Yale Chamber Music Series—The third in a series of four concerts performed by various faculty members of the Yale University School of Music. (Merkin Concert Hall. Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8.)

Sima Gorezkaya—Soprano. (Weill Recital Hall. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2.)

Emerson String Quartet—A Beethoven-Shostakovich-Mendelssohn program. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Virtuosi Quintet—A program of American music. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2. No charge beyond the society's usual entrance contribution.)

Mario Escudero—Flamenco guitarist, with Orlando Romero, dancer; Antonio Barbate, vocalist; and José Maria Moreno, flamenco guitarist. (92nd Street Y. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 3.)

Composers String Quartet—A Mendelssohn–Walter Piston–Beethoven program, with Mindy Kaufman, flute. (Faculty Room, Low Memorial Library, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 3. For information about tickets, call 280-3825.)

For the Love of Music—With Sara Sant'Ambrogio and Jeffrey Solow, cello. (Merkin Concert Hall. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 3.)

North/South Consonance Ensemble—With Constance Beavon, mezzo-soprano. (St. Stephen's Church, 122 W. 69th St. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Gerald Ranck—Harpsichord, in an all-Bach program. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 3:30. No tickets necessary.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—With Colin Carr, cello. (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 5, and Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 23-24, at 7:30.)

Andrew Schulman and Judith Pearce—Eight-string guitar and flute. (Ansche Chesed Temple, 251 W. 100th St. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 7:30. A benefit performance; for information about tickets, call 865-0600.)

Mark Peskanov—Violin. (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, Feb. 22, at 8.)

Maria Bachmann—Violin. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 8.)

Group for Contemporary Music—A program of songs, with group members Judith Bettina, soprano, and Tobias Picker, piano, and the Times Square Basstet. A new song cycle by Mr. Picker will be presented. (Merkin Concert Hall. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 8.)

Chamber Music at the Y—The Juilliard String Quartet and Rudolf Firkušný, piano. (92nd Street Y. Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 24-25, at 8.)

New York Philomusica—Works for chamber ensemble by Mozart, Vincent D'Indy, and Schubert. (Merkin Concert Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 8.)

Chelsea Chamber Ensemble—A program of twentieth-century American music. (Weill Recital Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 8.)

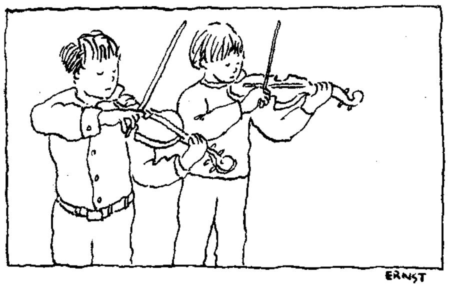
Zoltán Kocsis—A program of piano music by Liszt and Schubert. (Carnegie Hall. Thursday, Feb. 26, at 8.)

Irene Gubrud—Soprano. (Alice Tully Hall. Thursday, Feb. 26, at 8.)

Montserrat Caballé—Soprano. (Carnegie Hall. Friday, Feb. 27, at 8.)

Tokyo String Quartet—A Schubert-Mozart-Brahms program. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium. Friday, Feb. 27, at 8.)

Alaria Chamber Ensemble—The first of two concerts. (Weill Recital Hall. Friday, Feb. 27, at 8. For information about tickets, call 749-4035.)



Juilliard String Quartet—A Debussy-Schoenberg-Bartók program. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 3.)

David Taylor—Bass trombone, with Pamela Mia Paul, piano; Emily Mitchell, harp; and an assisting ensemble. (92nd Street Y. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8.)

Eduardo Fernandez—Classical guitarist. (Merkin Concert Hall. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8.)

Margaret Leng Tan—Piano, with Lise Messier, soprano; Stephen Burns, trumpet; Michael Pugliese, percussion; and others, in a program of music by the contemporary Japanese composer Somei Satoh. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—A Shostakovich-Beethoven-Smetana program. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Spoleto Festival Chamber Music at BAM—The Emerson String Quartet; Scott Nickrenz, viola; and Colin Carr, cello, in a Boccherini-Shostakovich-Mendelssohn program. The fourth in a series of seven concerts. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Saturday, Feb. 28, at 8.)

SPORTS

(The box-office number for Madison Square Garden is 564-4400, for the Meadowlands 1-201 935-3900, and for Nassau Coliseum 1-516 587-9222.)

Basketball—At **madison square garden:** Knicks vs. Cleveland Cavaliers, Thursday, Feb. 19, at 7:30, and Portland Trail Blazers, Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 7:30. . . . **byrne meadowlands arena:** Nets vs. Golden State Warriors, Thursday, Feb. 19; Knicks, Saturday, Feb. 21; Detroit Pistons, Tuesday, Feb. 24; and Indiana Pacers, Friday, Feb. 27. (Games begin at 7:30.)

Hockey—At **byrne meadowlands arena:** Devils vs. Hartford Whalers, Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 7:35; Islanders, Sunday, Feb. 22, at 5:05; and Edmonton Oilers, Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 7:35. . . . **madison square garden:** Rangers vs. Buffalo Sabres, Friday, Feb. 20, at 7:35, and Pittsburgh Penguins, Sunday, Feb. 22, at 7:35. . . . **nassau coliseum:** Islanders vs. Montreal Canadiens, Saturday, Feb. 21, at 5:05; Pittsburgh Penguins, Thursday, Feb. 26, at 8:05; and St. Louis Blues, Saturday, Feb. 28, at 7:05.

Racing—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30.

Track Meet—U.S.A./Mobil Indoor Track and Field Championship Grand Prix Finals. (Madison Square Garden. Friday, Feb. 27, at 6:30.)

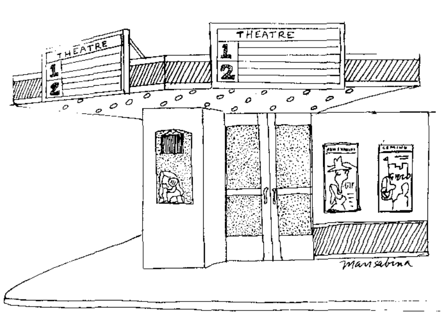
Trotting—At **roosevelt raceway:** Nightly at 7:30; through Sunday, March 15. . . . **meadowlands:** Weeknights at 7:30; through Saturday, Aug. 15.

ET ALIA

Prose Readings—Marian Seldes reading from letters that Janet Flanner wrote Natalia Murray. Mrs. Murray, Ned Rorem, Celia Bertin, and Philip Hamburger will reminisce about the author. (Manhattan Theatre Club at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. Monday, Feb. 23, at 8. For tickets, call 645-5848.) . . . ¶ Sue Miller, Robert Stone, Ethan Canin, and Don Linder reading from their own short stories. (Mitzi E. Newhouse Theatre, Lincoln Center. Monday, Feb. 23, at 8. For tickets, call 475-5707.) . . . ¶ William Alfred, Russell Banks, Amy Clampitt, William Matthews, and James Robison reading from the letters of Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, Stevens, and Fitzgerald. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Monday, Feb. 23, at 8.) . . . ¶ Mona Simpson and Irini Spanidou reading from their own works. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 8.) . . . ¶ Christine Baranski and Estelle Parsons reading from the stories of Joyce Carol Oates and M. F. K. Fisher, and Jon Deak playing a musical (bass fiddle) tribute to A. Conan Doyle's "The Hound of the Baskervilles." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 6:30.)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES



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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 21.

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)

Through Feb. 19: At 6, "Diary for My Children" (1984; directed by Márta Mészáros; in Hungarian); at 8, "No Man's Land" (1985; Alain Tanner; in French); and, at 10, "Ali: Fear Eats the Soul" (1974; Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German).

Feb. 20: At 6, "Ceddo" (1978; Ousmane Sembène; a Senegalese film, in Wolof); at 8:15, "Barravento" (1962; Glauber Rocha; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese); and, at 10, "Quilombo" (Carlos Diegues; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese).

Feb. 21-22: At 4, "Sambizanga" (1972; Sarah Maldoror; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese); at 6, "Ceddo;" at 8:15, "Barravento;" and, at 10, "Quilombo."

Feb. 24-26: At 6, "Emitai" (1973; Ousmane Sembène; a Senegalese film, in Wolof); at 8:15, "Barravento;" and, at 10, "Tent of Miracles" (1977; Nelson Pereira dos Santos; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese).

From Feb. 27: At 6, "The Sun's Burial" (1960; Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese); at 8, "Class Relations" (1983; Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet; in German); and, at 10:15, "The American Friend" (†).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "The Mission" (Roland Joffé), with Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons.

Theatre 2: "Betty Blue" (Jean-Jacques Beineix; in French), with Jean-Hugues Anglade and Béatrice Dalle.

Theatre 3: "Light of Day" (Paul Schrader), with Michael J. Fox, Gena Rowlands, and Joan Jett.

New Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"Mannequin" (Michael Gottlieb), with Andrew McCarthy and Kim Cattrall.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"Outrageous Fortune" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 19: "From the Hip" (Bob Clark), with Judd Nelson and Elizabeth Perkins. From Feb. 20: To be announced.

Theatre 2: "Radio Days" (Woody Allen), with Mia Farrow.

Theatre 3: "Platoon" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"Black Widow" (1987 †).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Hannah and Her Sisters" (†).

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

"Black Widow" (1987 †).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"Mannequin" (Michael Gottlieb), with Andrew McCarthy and Kim Cattrall.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

Through Feb. 19: "The Mission" (Roland Joffé), with Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons.

From Feb. 20: "Square Dance" (Dan Petrie), with Jane Alexander, Rob Lowe, and Jason Robards.

Manhattan 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 19: "From the Hip" (Bob Clark), with Judd Nelson and Elizabeth Perkins. From Feb. 20: To be announced.

Theatre 2: "Over the Top" (Menahem Golan), with Sylvester Stallone.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "84 Charing Cross Road" (David Jones), with Anne Bancroft and Anthony Hopkins.

Theatre 2: "Outrageous Fortune" (†).

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Round Midnight" (†).

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)

Theatre 1: "Duet for One" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Julie Andrews, Alan Bates, and Max von Sydow.

Theatre 2: "Betty Blue" (Jean-Jacques Beineix; in French), with Jean-Hugues Anglade and Béatrice Dalle.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "Light of Day" (Paul Schrader), with Michael J. Fox, Gena Rowlands, and Joan Jett.

Theatre 2: "The Bedroom Window" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"Little Shop of Horrors" (1986 †).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "Radio Days" (Woody Allen), with Mia Farrow.

Theatre 2: "Platoon" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

"My Sweet Little Village" (Jiří Menzel; a Czech film).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

"Dead of Winter" (Arthur Penn), with Mary Steenburgen, Roddy McDowall, and Jan Rubes.

U.A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"The Bedroom Window" (†).

R.K.O. 86th St. Twin, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)

Theatre 1: "Light of Day" (Paul Schrader), with Michael J. Fox, Gena Rowlands, and Joan Jett.

Theatre 2: "Over the Top" (Menahem Golan), with Sylvester Stallone.

Loews Orpheum 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 19: "Critical Condition" (Michael Apted), with Richard Pryor. From Feb. 20: To be announced.

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 19: "From the Hip" (Bob Clark), with Judd Nelson and Elizabeth Perkins. From Feb. 20: To be announced.

86th St. East, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

"Mannequin" (Michael Gottlieb), with Andrew McCarthy and Kim Cattrall.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum 1 and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Theatre 1: "The Legend of Suram Fortress" (1985; directed by Sergei Paradjanov and Dodo Abashidze; in Georgian).

Theatre 2: Feb. 18: "The Clowns" (1971; Federico Fellini; in Italian); and "Amarcord" (1974; Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Bruno Zanin. Feb. 19: "The Samurai Trilogy" (1954-56; Hiroshi Inagaki; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune. Feb. 20-21: "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (1953; in French), directed by, and with, Jacques Tati; and "The Mad Adventures of 'Rabbi' Jacob" (1973; Gérard Oury; in French), with Louis de Funès. Feb. 22-23: "Jules and Jim" (1962; François Truffaut; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Oskar Werner, and Henri Serre; and "Small Change" (1976; François Truffaut; in French), with Geory Desmouceaux. Feb. 24-25: "Viridiana" (1961; Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal and Silvia Pinal; and "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977; Luis Buñuel; in French), with Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet, and Angela Molina. Feb. 26: "The Magic Flute" (1975; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). From Feb. 27: "The Color of Pomegranates" (1969; Sergei Paradjanov; in Georgian).

Bleecker St. Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)

Theatre 1: (Separate admissions) "Come and See" (Elem Klimov; in Russian); and "Ménage" (†).

Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "Men . . ." (†); and "Sherman's March" (Ross McElwee).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "Blue Velvet" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 19: "Children of a Lesser God" (Randa Haines), with William Hurt and Marlee Matlin. From Feb. 20: "Eat and Run" (Chris Hart).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

"Over the Top" (Menahem Golan), with Sylvester Stallone.

R.K.O. Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "Crimes of the Heart" (†).

Theatre 2: "Little Shop of Horrors" (1986 †).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: (Separate admissions) "Down by Law" (†) and "The Hour of the Star" (†).

Theatre 2: "Hannah and Her Sisters" (†).

Theatre 3: "A Room with a View" (†).

Theatre 4: "Sid and Nancy" (Alex Cox), with Gary Oldman and Chloe Webb.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Outrageous Fortune" (†).

Theatre 2: "Black Widow" (1987 †).

Theatre 3: Through Feb. 19: "The Bedroom Window" (†). From Feb. 20: "Billy Galvin" (John Gray), with Karl Malden.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

Through Feb. 26: "The Color of Money" (†).

From Feb. 27: "Beyond Therapy" (Robert Altman), with Jeff Goldblum, Julie Hagerty, Tom Conti, and Glenda Jackson.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"Outrageous Fortune" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"The Good Father" (Mike Newell), with Anthony Hopkins.

New Carnegie, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

"Hannah and Her Sisters" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)

"One Woman or Two" (Daniel Vigne; in English and French), with Gérard Depardieu, Sigourney Weaver, and Ruth Westheimer.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"The Decline of the American Empire" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Dead of Winter" (Arthur Penn), with Mary Steenburgen, Roddy McDowall, and Jan Rubes.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "Scene of the Crime" (André Téchiné; in French), with Catherine Deneuve.

Theatre 2: "Thérèse" (†).

Theatre 3: "Faces of Women" (Désiré Ecaré; in French)

Cinema Studio 1 and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 19: "Malandro" (Ruy Guerra; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese). From Feb. 20: "Alpine Fire" (Fredi Murer; in Swiss-German).

Theatre 2: "Ménage" (†).

Embassy 72nd St. 1 and 2, B'way at 72nd. (724-6745)

Theatre 1: "Black Widow" (1987 †).

Theatre 2: "A Room with a View" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Mannequin" (Michael Gottlieb), with Andrew McCarthy and Kim Cattrall.

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 19: "From the Hip" (Bob Clark), with Judd Nelson and Elizabeth Perkins. From Feb. 20: To be announced.

Theatre 3: "Radio Days" (Woody Allen), with Mia Farrow.

Theatre 4: Through Feb. 19: "Light of Day" (Paul Schrader), with Michael J. Fox, Gena

Rowlands, and Joan Jett. From Feb. 20: To be announced.
Theatre 5: "Platoon" (†).
Theatre 6: "Over the Top" (Menahem Golan), with Sylvester Stallone.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "The Decline of the American Empire" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hannah and Her Sisters" (†).

Olympia Quad, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 19: "Light of Day" (Paul Schrader), with Michael J. Fox, Gena Rowlands, and Joan Jett. From Feb. 20: "The Good Wife" (Ken Cameron), with Rachel Ward, Bryan Brown, and Sam Neill.
Theatre 2: "Children of a Lesser God" (Randa Haines), with William Hurt and Marlee Matlin.
Theatre 3: "Little Shop of Horrors" (1986 †).
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 19: "Peggy Sue Got Married" (†). From Feb. 20: "The Mission" (Roland Joffé), with Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Blue Velvet" (†).
Theatre 2: "Black Widow" (1987 †).
Theatre 3: "Wanted: Dead or Alive" (directed by Gary Sherman), with Rutger Hauer.
Theatre 4: "Over the Top" (Menahem Golan), with Sylvester Stallone.
Theatre 5: "The Mission" (Roland Joffé), with Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons.
Theatre 6: "The Color Purple" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
Through Feb. 19: "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home" (†).
From Feb. 20: "Death Before Dishonor" (Terry Leonard), with Fred Dryer and Brian Keith.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 26: "Crocodile Dundee" (Peter Faiman), with Paul Hogan. From Feb. 27: "A Nightmare on Elm Street, Part 3" (Chuck Russell).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 19: "Children of a Lesser God" (Randa Haines), with William Hurt and Marlee Matlin. Feb. 20-26: "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home" (†). From Feb. 27: "A Nightmare on Elm Street, Part 3."
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 19: "Peggy Sue Got Married" (†). Feb. 20-26: "The Golden Child" (Michael Ritchie), with Eddie Murphy. From Feb. 27: "Crocodile Dundee."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Platoon" (†).

Loews State 1 and 2, B'way at 45th. (575-5060)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 19: "Critical Condition" (Michael Apted), with Richard Pryor. From Feb. 20: Theatre closed.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 19: "The Golden Child" (Michael Ritchie), with Eddie Murphy. From Feb. 20: Theatre closed.

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
"Little Shop of Horrors" (1986 †).

New Embassy 49th Street, 49th St. near Seventh Ave. (757-7003)
Through Feb. 26: "Lady and the Tramp" (1955), a Walt Disney full-length cartoon. (No performances Wednesday, Feb. 18, and Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 23-24.)
From Feb. 27: (Matinées only) "Lady and the Tramp;" and (evenings only) "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home" (†).

R.K.O. National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Mannequin" (Michael Gottlieb), with Andrew McCarthy and Kim Cattrall.
Theatre 2: "Light of Day" (Paul Schrader), with Michael J. Fox, Gena Rowlands, and Joan Jett.

U.A. Twin 1 and 2, B'way at 49th. (247-1635)
Theatre 1: "From the Hip" (Bob Clark), with Judd Nelson and Elizabeth Perkins.
Theatre 2: "The Bedroom Window" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Feb. 19: "Salò, 120 Days of Sodom" (1977; directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian).
Feb. 20-21: "Koyaanisqatsi" (1983; Godfrey Reggio); and "Subway" (1985; Luc Besson; in French), with Christopher Lambert and Isabelle Adjani.

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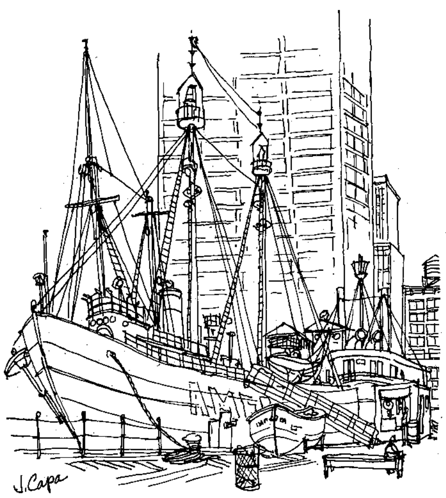
Feb. 22-24: "Letter to Brezhnev" (1986; Chris Bernard); and "Darling" (1965; John Schlesinger), with Laurence Harvey, Dirk Bogarde, and Julie Christie.
Feb. 25-26: "Eléna et les Hommes" (1956; Jean Renoir; in French), with Ingrid Bergman, Jean Marais, Mel Ferrer, and Juliette Greco; and "French Cancan" (1954; Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin, Maria Felix, Françoise Arnoul, and Edith Piaf.
Feb. 27-28: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961; Blake Edwards), with Audrey Hepburn, George Peppard, Patricia Neal, Martin Balsam, and Mickey Rooney; and "Two for the Road" (1967; Stanley Donen), with Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through Feb. 19: "Andy Hardy Meets Debutante" (1940; George Seitz), with Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney; and "That's Entertainment!" (1974; Jack Haley, Jr.), a documentary, including clips from old M-G-M musicals.
Feb. 20-21: "For Me and My Gal" (1942; Busby Berkeley), with Judy Garland, Gene Kelly, and George Murphy; and "Babes in Arms" (1939; Busby Berkeley), with Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney.
Feb. 22-23: "The Clock" (†); and "New York, New York" (1977; Martin Scorsese), with Liza Minnelli and Robert De Niro.
Feb. 24-25: "Listen, Darling" (1938; Edwin Martin), with Judy Garland, Freddie Bartholomew, Mary Astor, and Walter Pidgeon; and "Strike Up the Band" (†).
Feb. 26: "A Child Is Waiting" (1963; John Cassavetes), with Burt Lancaster and Judy Garland; and "I Could Go On Singing" (†).
Feb. 27-28: "The Pirate" (†); and musical excerpts from four films featuring Judy Garland.

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (222-3370)
Feb. 18: "The Canterbury Tales" (1972; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Hugh Griffith, Alan Webb, and Jenny Runacre; and "Pigpen" (1969; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Pierre Clémenti and Jean-Pierre Léaud.
Feb. 19: "Love and Death" (1975) and "Sleeper" (1973), both directed by, and with, Woody Allen.
Feb. 20-21: "Ira, You'll Get Into Trouble" (1970; Stephen A. Sbarge); and "The Big Chill" (1983; Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline, Glenn Close, William Hurt, Jeff Goldblum, Tom Berenger, Mary Kay Place, JoBeth Williams, and Meg Tilly.
Feb. 22: "Witness" (1985; Peter Weir), with Harrison Ford, Kelly McGillis, Josef Sommer, and Lukas Haas; and "The Plumber" (1978; Peter Weir).
Feb. 23: "Low Visibility" (1985; Patricia Gruben); and "Crime Wave" (1985; John Paizs).



Feb. 24: "Say Amen, Somebody" (1982; George T. Nierenberg), a documentary on gospel music; and "The Wilby Conspiracy" (1975; Ralph Nelson), with Sidney Poitier, Michael Caine, and Nicol Williamson.
Feb. 25: "A Composer's Notes: Philip Glass and the Making of an Opera" (1985; Michael Blackwood); and "Colin McPhee: The Lure of Asian Music" (1985; Michael Blackwood).
Feb. 26: "Zelig" (1983; Woody Allen), with Allen and Mia Farrow; and "The Purple Rose of Cairo" (1985; Woody Allen), with Mia Farrow and Jeff Daniels.
Feb. 27-28: A program of erotic films.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Feb. 18: "Dancing Mothers" (1926; Herbert Brenon; a silent film), with Clara Bow, Alice Joyce, and Conway Tearle; and "Free to Love" (1925; Frank O'Connor; a silent film), with Clara Bow, Donald Keith, and Raymond McKee.
Feb. 19: "The Last Picture Show" (1971; Peter Bogdanovich), with Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, Ben Johnson, and Cloris Leachman; and "Daisy Miller" (1974; Peter Bogdanovich), with Cybill Shepherd.
Feb. 20-21: "Gore Vidal: The Man Who Said No" (1982; Gary Conklin), a documentary; and "Paul Bowles in Morocco" (1970; Gary Conklin).
Feb. 22: "Montenegro" (1981; Dusan Makavejev), with Susan Anspach and Erland Josephson; and "The Coca-Cola Kid" (1985; Dusan Makavejev), with Eric Roberts.
Feb. 23: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1966; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with a cast of nonprofessionals; and "Notes for an African Orestes" (1970; Pier Paolo Pasolini).
Feb. 24: "Pickup on South Street" (1953; Samuel Fuller), with Richard Widmark, Jean Peters, and Thelma Ritter; and "Underworld, U.S.A." (1961; Samuel Fuller), with Cliff Robertson.
Feb. 25: "La Grande Illusion" (1937; Jean Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Marcel Dalio; and "Swamp Water" (1941; Jean Renoir), with Walter Huston and Virginia Gilmore.
Feb. 26: "Next Stop, Greenwich Village" (1976; Paul Mazursky), with Shelley Winters, Lenny Baker, Ellen Greene, Christopher Walken, and Antonio Fargas; and "Enter Laughing" (1967; Carl Reiner), with José Ferrer, Shelley Winters, and Elaine May.
Feb. 27-28: "Pierrot le Fou" (†); and "Alphaville" (1965; Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina, and Akim Tamiroff.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 18: "Blackmail" (1929; Alfred Hitchcock), with Anny Ondra, Cyril Ritchard, and Sara Allgood; and "Sabotage" ("The Woman Alone;" 1936; Alfred Hitchcock), with Sylvia Sidney, Oscar Homolka, and Desmond Tester.
Feb. 19: "Séance on a Wet Afternoon" (1964; Bryan Forbes), with Kim Stanley and Richard Attenborough; and "Portrait of Jennie" (1949; William Dieterle), with Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotten.
Feb. 20-21: "Trouble in Paradise" (1932; Ernst Lubitsch), with Kay Francis, Herbert Marshall, Miriam Hopkins, and Edward Everett Horton; and "Design for Living" (1933; Ernst Lubitsch), with Fredric March, Miriam Hopkins, and Gary Cooper.
Feb. 22: "Bunny Lake Is Missing" (1965; Otto Preminger), with Laurence Olivier, Carol Lynley, Keir Dullea, and Noël Coward; and "Anatomy of a Murder" (1959; Otto Preminger), with James Stewart, Lee Remick, Ben Gazzara, Arthur O'Connell, and George C. Scott.
Feb. 23: "Amarcord" (1974; Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Bruno Zanin; and "The Clowns" (1971; Federico Fellini; in Italian).
Feb. 24: "The Scarlet Empress" (1934; Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich, Sam Jaffe, and John Lodge; and "The Devil Is a Woman" (1935; Josef von Sternberg),

with Marlene Dietrich, Lionel Atwill, and Cesar Romero.

Feb. 25: "Jumbo" (1962; Charles Walters), with Doris Day, Stephen Boyd, and Jimmy Durante; and "Diamond Horseshoe" (1945; George Seaton), with Betty Grable and Dick Haymes.

Feb. 26: "Made for Each Other" (1939 †) and "Swing High, Swing Low" (†).

Feb. 27-28: "East of Eden" (1955; Elia Kazan), with Julie Harris, James Dean, Raymond Massey, and Richard Davalos; and "Rebel Without a Cause" (1955; Nicholas Ray), with James Dean, Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Corey Allen, and Nick Adams.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

THEATRE 1: Feb. 20 at 2:30: "High Speed" (1986; directed by Monique Dartonne and Michel Kaptur; in French, with English subtitles), with Mireille Perrier and Bruce Thurman. . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 6: "Mélo" (1986; Alain Resnais; in French, with English subtitles), with Sabine Azéma, Fanny Ardant, André Dussollier, and Pierre Arditi. Mr. Resnais and Miss Ardant will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 2: "Inspecteur Lavardin" (1986; Claude Chabrol; in French, with English subtitles), with Jean Poiret, Jean-Claude Brialy, and Bernadette Lafont. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 5: "Partir Revenir" (1985; Claude Lelouch; in French, with English subtitles), with Annie Girardot, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Evelyne Bouix, Michel Piccoli, and Françoise Fabian. Mr. Lelouch will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 2:30: "Notre Histoire" (1984; Bertrand Blier; in French, with English subtitles), with Alain Delon and Nathalie Baye. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 5: "Inspecteur Lavardin." . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 2:30: "Notre Histoire." . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 6 and Feb. 24 at 2:30: "La Puritaine" (1986; Jacques Doillon; in French, with English subtitles), with Michel Piccoli, Sabine Azéma, and Sandrine Bonnaire. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 6:30: "Rosa la Rose" (1986; Paul Vecchiali; in French, with English subtitles), with Marianne Basler, Jean Sorel, and Pierre Cosso. Miss Basler will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 2:30: "Black Mic Mac" (1986; Thomas Gilou; in French, with English subtitles), with Jacques Villeret, Isaach de Bankolé, and Félicité Wouassi. Mr. Gilou will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 6: "Partir Revenir." . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8:30 and Feb. 27 at 2:30: "Maine Océan" (1986; Jacques Rozier; in French, with English subtitles), with Bernard Menez, Luis Rego, Lydia Feld, and Rosa-Maria Gomes. . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 6:30 and Feb. 28 at 2: "Désordre" (1986; Olivier Assayas; in French, with English subtitles), with Wadeck Stanczak, Ann-Gisel Glass, and Lucas Belvaux. Mr. Assayas and Mr. Stanczak will be present on Feb. 27 at 6:30. . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 5: "Abel Gance et Son Napoléon" (1984; Nelly Kaplan), a documentary. Miss Kaplan will be present.

THEATRE 2: Feb. 20 at 3 and 6:30, Feb. 21-22 at 2:30 and 5:30, Feb. 23 at 3 and 6:30, and Feb. 24 at 6:30: Six different programs of films by Rudy Burckhardt. . . . ¶ Feb. 26-27 at 6:30 and Feb. 28 at 2:30 and 5:30: Films nominated for the 1986 Academy Awards, titles to be announced.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—"Before Hollywood: Turn-of-the-Century Film from American Archives," a program of sixty-nine pristine 35-mm. prints, from 1894 to 1915, arranged in six programs. Through Feb. 21: Program IV, "Domestic Life," contains seven films from 1912 to 1913, with showings Wednesday through Saturday at 11:30 and 2:30. . . . ¶ Feb. 22-28: Program V, "The Frontier Spirit," contains three films from 1912 to 1915, with showings Sunday at 3, Tuesday at 6, and Wednesday through Saturday at 11:30. . . . ¶ Feb. 24-28: Program VI, "Love and Misadventure," contains three films from 1915, with showings Tuesday at 1:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2:30. Closed Mondays.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN THESE PAGES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

The American Friend (1977)—The young German director Wim Wenders is attracted to the idea of telling a story, but he can't quite keep his mind on it; he overdoses on mood—poetic urban masochism—in this adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's crime novel "Ripley's Game." Wenders' unsettling compositions are neurotically beautiful visions of a disordered world, but the film doesn't have the nasty, pleasurable cleverness of a good thriller; dramatically, it's stagnant—inverted Wagnerianism. Bruno Ganz is impressive as the watchful, anxious-eyed hero; with more than a half-dozen directors (including Dennis Hopper, Nicholas Ray, Gérard Blain, and Samuel Fuller) playing crooks. Script by Wenders; cinematography by Robby Müller. In English, German, and French. (Public Theatre; starting Feb. 27, showings at 10:15.)

The Bedroom Window—This suspense film by the writer-director Curtis Hanson has a good premise. A married woman (Isabelle Huppert) who has seen an assault from her lover's window can't give her testimony to the police without endangering her marriage, so her lover (Steve Guttenberg) reports all the details she has given him but pretends that he was the observer. His apparently innocent lie gets them both into a mess. It's an erratic and, finally, disappointing picture (it loses its snap). Yet you keep rooting for it, because Elizabeth McGovern, as the assault victim, a cocktail waitress, has the style and resources that the other two leads lack, and the cinematography, by Gilbert Taylor, has a snazzy verve, and Hanson has some clever ideas, such as the way he sets up a courtroom sequence (with Wallace Shawn demonstrating a new witty suavity as the attorney for the assailant) and the way he directs the almost mute psycho (the chilling, well-cast Brad Greenquist). Also with Paul Shenar, Carl Lumbly, Frederick Coffin, Sara Carlson, and Maury Chaykin; adapted from the English novel "The Witnesses," by Anne Holden. The Baltimore locations, and the scenes in Wilmington and Winston-Salem, North Carolina, doubling for Baltimore, provide a colorful architectural mix. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/9/87.) (Gemini, U.A. East, and U.A. Twin. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex; through Feb. 19.)

Black Widow—With Debra Winger and Theresa Russell, directed by Bob Rafelson. (Reviewed in this issue.) (34th St. East, Sutton, 23rd St. West Triplex, Embassy 72nd St., and Criterion Center.)

Blue Velvet—Written and directed by David Lynch, this is possibly the only coming-of-age movie in which sex has the danger and the heightened excitement of a horror picture. The film is consciously purplish and consciously funny, and the two work together in an original, down-home way. The setting is an archetypal small, sleepy city in an indefinite mythic present that feels like the past, and Kyle MacLachlan is Jeffrey, the clean-cut young man who's scared of his dirty thoughts (but wants to have them anyway). He commutes between the blue lady of the night (Isabella Rossellini, who's a dream of a freak) and the sunshine girl he loves (Laura Dern). The movie has so much aural-visual humor and poetry that it's sustained despite the wobbly plot and other weaknesses. With Dennis Hopper, who gives the movie a jolt of horrific energy, and Dean Stockwell, who is a smiling wonder as Ben the sandman. Also with Hope Lange, Priscilla Pointer, Brad Dourif, and Jack Nance. (9/22/86) (Waverly, and Criterion Center.)

The Clock (1945)—A sweetly charming, if maybe too irresistible, Second World War romance, featuring Judy Garland and Robert Walker. There's a very shrewd, very wet script—Robert Nathan, working with Joseph Schrank, spread his trembling sensitivities upon the already shaky story by Paul and Pauline Gallico. Fortunately, the director, Vincente Minnelli, gave it a very distinctive innocent quality, so that it doesn't seem intolerably calculated. Robert Walker plays a gentle country boy, a corporal with two days of leave in New York before going overseas. He meets Judy Garland, a New York office worker, in Pennsylvania Station and they go sightseeing together. They're separated in a crowded subway and each is panicked by the fear of never seeing the other again; when they find each other, they decide to get married—immediately. The film is beautifully rhythmed and it isn't all romance: the edges are filled with comic characters—Keenan Wynn and Moyna Macgill are the most memorable. (Regency; Feb. 22-23.)

The Color of Money—This Martin Scorsese film takes up Paul Newman as Fast Eddie Felson twenty-five years after the close of the 1961 Robert Rossen film "The Hustler," in which Eddie, the new poolroom champion, quit the game. Now he's a silver-haired Chicago liquor salesman, a likable cynical sharpie who himself stakes young hustlers (for sixty per cent of their winnings). When he sees the raw, cocky upstart Vincent (Tom Cruise), he makes a deal to train the kid. Newman brings off some beautiful smiling deviltry. The kick he gets out of acting is inseparable from Eddie's con artistry, and, with the help of pungent low-life dialogue by Richard Price, who wrote the script, he carries the action along. But about midway the joy goes out of Newman's performance, which (despite the efforts of a lot of good actors) is the only life in the movie. With Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, Helen Shaver, Forest Whitaker, John Turturro, and Bill Cobbs. (11/3/86) (Guild; through Feb. 26.)

The Color Purple (1985)—The popular novel by Alice Walker is about the bonding of Southern black women in the first half of the century. The women are generous, hardworking, artistically gifted, and understanding; the men are lazy, lecherous oppressors. Probably the book gets by with its rampant female chauvinism because the story is put in the mouth of the battered fourteen-year-old heroine Celie; it's written in a raw, cadenced dialect and it has a joyous emotional swing to it. Steven Spielberg, who directed the movie version, appears to have taken the novel seriously—inspirational tone, pop-folk religiosity, triumph of the human spirit, and all—and been intimidated by it. This family saga, spanning more than thirty years, is the clumsiest, least confident feature he has done. He sees rural Georgia in 1909 the way a European director might—the picture seems to be taking place in a made-up, faraway kingdom. With Desreta Jackson as the young Celie and Whoopi Goldberg taking over the role, Danny Glover as Celie's brute of a husband, Willard Pugh as her stepson, Margaret Avery as the woman she falls in love with, and Oprah Winfrey as the powerhouse Sofia. The gooey score is by Quincy Jones. (12/30/85) (Criterion Center.)

Crimes of the Heart—Diane Keaton, Jessica Lange, and Sissy Spacek playing sisters and sparking off each other are something to see. The play, by Beth Henley—a comedy about wacked-out normality, set in Hazlehurst, Mississippi—has its goofy charm; it's thin material, though, and her screen adaptation is just the usual "opening out." But the three actresses put so much faith in their roles that they carry the movie, triumphantly. They take the play's borderline pathos about heartbreakingly screwed-up lives—it's a mixture of looniness and lyricism—and give it real vitality. These are inspired performances. With Sam Shepard, Tess Harper, David Carpenter, and Hurd Hatfield. Directed (without much flair) by Bruce Beresford. (12/15/86) (R.K.O Art Greenwich Twin.)

The Decline of the American Empire—The French-Canadian writer-director Denys Arcand takes on the subject of sex in a period of social change, without the binding ties of family and religion or strong commitment to the future—sex in a period when the eight principal characters (aging middle-class intellectuals connected with the History Department of a Montreal university) no longer believe in postponing pleasure. On this Friday afternoon in autumn, the women work out together at a gym in the city while the men, gathered at a lakeside cottage, prepare

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a festive dinner. Both groups talk about sex, and when they're together in the long evening they go on talking about sex, but more discreetly—with less bawdiness and bravura. Arcand isn't out to expose these people as spiritually empty; he's trying to present a truthful look at how they live. There's nothing weighty in his approach; it's a lovely, very unassuming picture, yet there is enough drama so that by the end a subtle shift in all the relationships is necessary. And the foreground action and the flashbacks that had been providing the background begin to merge. In French. (12/15/86) (Cinema 3, and Metro Cinema.)

Down by Law—Jim Jarmusch's low-key minimalist comedy about American anomie, shot in black-and-white. The setting is New Orleans, where two deadbeats—Jack, an ineffectual pimp (John Lurie), and Zack, an itinerant disk jockey (Tom Waits)—become the victims of frameups and are put in the same prison cell, where they vegetate in hostile silence. Everything changes when a little, life-loving Italian, Roberto (Roberto Benigni), is put in with them; the three become pals, grinning and talking together. And, eventually, Roberto devises an escape plan. Jarmusch's passive style has its wit, but the style is deadening here until he brings in Roberto—a character out of folk humor. With Ellen Barkin, Billie Neal, Nicoletta Braschi, Rockets Redglare, and Vernel Bagneris. (10/20/86) (Quad Cinema.)

Hannah and Her Sisters (1986)—A minor, agreeably skillful movie by Woody Allen, a new canto in his ongoing poem to love and New York City which includes "Annie Hall" and "Manhattan." It's likable, but you wish there were more to like. The principal characters are members of a show-business family, with the stable, dependable Hannah (Mia Farrow), a successful actress who manages a career and children with equal serenity, as the pivotal figure, and Barbara Hershey and Dianne Wiest as her sisters. Hannah's parents are played by Maureen O'Sullivan and the late Lloyd Nolan, her financial-consultant husband by Michael Caine, and her TV writer-producer ex-husband by Allen himself. The picture would be lifeless without him; the other roles are so thin that there's nobody else to draw us into the story, and all the vital vulgarity of Woody Allen's early movies has been drained away. The picture is all tasteful touches, and there's an element of cultural self-approval in its tone, and a trace of smugness in its narrow concern for family and friends. He uses style to blot out the rest of New York City. It's a form of repression, and, from the look of the movie, repression is what's romantic to him. With Max von Sydow as a gloomy, rigid intellectual, and Julie Kavner, Carrie Fisher, Daniel Stern, Sam Waterston, Tony Roberts (uncredited), and Bobby Short as himself. The cinematography is by Carlo Di Palma. (2/24/86) (Eastside Cinema, Quad Cinema, New Carnegie, and Metro Cinema.)

The Hour of the Star (1985)—Directed by Suzana Amaral. A Brazilian film, in Portuguese. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Quad Cinema.)

I Could Go On Singing (1963)—Dreadful, but often fascinating; Judy Garland in the sort of movie that is usually made about a performer long after the events, and with someone else playing the lead. Her face puffy, her manner distressed, she goes through a sort of "Madame X" version of a selfish singer's life, in which she belts out numbers at the Palladium. Made in England and directed by Ronald Neame. With Dirk Bogarde, Jack Klugman, and Aline MacMahon. (Regency; Feb. 26.)

Little Shop of Horrors—Jivey, senseless fun. This musical is taken from the Off Broadway show that was based on Roger Corman's 1960 quickie—a junky travesty of sci-fi genetic-mutation pictures. Rick Moranis plays Seymour, the assistant in a skid-row flower shop, circa 1960, who tends the ravenous little flowering cactus that he names after the sexpot clerk Audrey (Ellen Greene). Her steady date is a sadistic biker-dentist (Steve Martin), and Bill Murray plays this brute's pain-freak patient. The Martin-Murray sequence is a classic encounter: a piece of transcendent slapstick. The movie is nothing but blown-up cartoon-style friskiness, but it makes you feel as inexplicably sappy and contented as a kid used to feel on Sunday morning lying on his stomach reading the funnies. The script and the lyrics are by Howard Ashman; the music is by Alan Menken. Directed by Frank Oz. (1/12/87) (Beekman, R.K.O. Art Greenwich Twin, Olympia Quad, and Movieland.)

Made for Each Other (1939)—Carole Lombard and James Stewart as plain, ordinary struggling young married folk in New York, having money troubles. The film, written by Jo Swerling and directed by John Cromwell, manages to jack up a little excitement when the couple's baby gets sick and serum must be flown from Utah. The mercy plane goes through a storm, gales, blizzards, thunder, and lightning. You'll be relieved to know that the serum arrives in the very nick of time, and the husband gets a promotion. With Charles Coburn, Lucile Watson, Harry Davenport, Eddie Quillan, Esther Dale, and Louise Beavers. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 26.)

Men . . .—When the handsome, self-centered Julius (Heiner Lauterbach), a Munich advertising executive, discovers that his wife (Ulrike Kriener) has been having an affair with the oafish Stefan (Uwe Ochsenknecht), a long-haired bohemian, he wants to know what Stefan's attraction is, so he assumes a false name and moves in with him. Julius takes some kind of revenge by turning Stefan into an orderly bourgeois with a regular job; while that happens, whimsical gags are tossed together with a jocular feminist exposé of men's attitudes toward women. The picture is harmless and insipid, in the mode of French farces such as "Cousin, Cousine;" it sags in the middle and then collapses in an absurdist ending. Written and directed by Doris Dörrie. In German. (9/8/86) (Bleecker St. Cinema.)

Ménage—The first half hour of this sex farce is wonderfully brisk and slam-bang provocative: the writer-director Bertrand Blier violates old formulas and experiments with ideas of subversion and chaos. Gérard Depardieu is the burglar who, one night in a café, overhears the callous bitchy wife, Miou-Miou, bawling out her loving husband, Michel Blanc, because he can't make enough money to please her. Enamored of the mousy husband, Depardieu takes the two along on his surreally easy burglaries, waiting for his chance to bed the man. By the time that Miou-Miou has been sold to a pimp and the two men are in drag, working as prostitutes, Blier is trying so hard to be outrageous that he loses the beat; the outrageousness comes to seem another kind of bondage to formula. In French. (Bleecker St. Cinema, and Cinema Studio.)

Outrageous Fortune—With Bette Midler, Shelley Long, Peter Coyote, and George Carlin; directed by Arthur Hiller. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Bay Cinema, Coronet, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Ziegfeld.)

Peggy Sue Got Married—Distressed by her marital troubles, Peggy Sue (Kathleen Turner), the mother of two grownup children, collapses at the twenty-fifth reunion of her high-school class, and when she wakes up she discovers that she has gone back in time to the spring of 1960. Directed by Francis Coppola, this is a dream movie that asks whether Peggy Sue, knowing what she does at forty-three, should marry the same boy—passionate Charlie (Nicolas Cage), the only man she ever dated—knowing that he'll turn into the man who introduces himself on television as Crazy Charlie, the Appliance King. The underlying question is: Should Peggy Sue reconcile with her husband or go ahead and get a divorce? Coppola's efforts to bring depth to this material that has no depth make the picture seem groggy. It's as if he were trying to reach through a veil of fog. With Barbara Harris, Barry Miller, and Kevin J. O'Connor. (10/20/86) (Olympia Quad, and Embassy; through Feb. 19.)

Pierrot le Fou (1965)—Jean-Luc Godard's unresolved, disturbing film. The narrative encompasses a satire of advertising, an existential stalemate, political violence, and romance, all shot—in color—in a hard-edge style. With Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina. In French. (Thalia SoHo; Feb. 27-28.)

The Pirate (1948)—Judy Garland is a nineteenth-century maiden on a Caribbean island, dreaming of a famous pirate, and Gene Kelly, bouncing with élan in the manner of Fairbanks, is a travelling actor who pretends to be that pirate. This Vincente Minnelli musical, based on an S. N. Behrman play, is flamboyant in an innocent and lively way. Though it doesn't quite work, and it's all a bit broad, it doesn't sour in the memory. The score is by Cole Porter. With Walter Slezak and Gladys Cooper. (Regency; Feb. 27-28.)

Platoon—Vietnam, as seen by the writer-director Oliver Stone, who dropped out of Yale and, feeling, he says, that he needed to be an anonymous common soldier, enlisted and saw action with the 25th Infantry along the Cambodian border. Charlie Sheen plays Chris, the autobiographical figure (who, regrettably, narrates the movie by reading aloud the letters he writes home to his grandmother). Chris finds two authority figures in two sergeants who represent good and evil. Willem Dafoe's Sgt. Elias is a supersensitive hippie pothead, who cares about the men—he's a veteran fighter who's kept his soul. Tom Berenger's Sgt. Barnes is a kickass boozer—a psycho whose scarred, dead-eyed face suggests the spirit of war. There are fine, scary scenes, but there are others where you think, It's a bit much. The movie crowds you; it doesn't give you room to have an honest emotion. And when Chris calmly, deliberately shoots a fellow-soldier, and the murder is presented as an unambiguous, justified execution, you may wonder at the mixture of war elegy and pulp revenge fantasy. With Keith David, Forest Whitaker, and Kevin Dillon. Cinematography by Robert Richardson. (1/12/87) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

A Room with a View—Adapted from the early novel by E. M. Forster, this is a whimsical social comedy about a muddled young English girl (Helena Bonham-Carter) who desires yet fears sexual love; she runs away from the man (Julian Sands) who stirs her emotions, and becomes engaged to a rich twit (Daniel Day Lewis). Bonham-Carter lacks the carriage and presence of a trained actress, and Sands is playing Forster's flimsy—almost abstract—dream of a natural, uninhibited lover, and is rather vague. But the movie is well paced, and it never loses its hold on a viewer's affections, because it's so thoroughly inhabited. It's more than a little precious, but it's a piece of charming foolishness. With Denholm Elliott, Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, Simon Callow, and Rosemary Leach. It was directed by James Ivory, from a script by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala that pares down the text skillfully and takes much of its lively, dizzy dialogue directly from Forster. (3/24/86) (Quad Cinema, and Embassy 72nd St.)

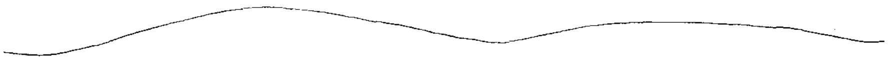
Round Midnight—Most of Bertrand Tavernier's mournful, blue-toned movie, which, an opening title tells us, was "inspired by incidents in the lives of Francis Paudras and Bud Powell," is set in Paris in 1959. The French jazz enthusiast Paudras is now called Francis Borier and is played by François Cluzet, and Powell, the great bebop pianist, who suffered frequent nervous breakdowns and then made a new life abroad, is now the dazed, alcoholic tenor-sax man Dale Turner, and is played by the near-legendary Dexter Gordon. The enthusiast is a saintly groupie. You know what kind of movie it's going to be when you see this guy out in a drenching rain, crouched against the building where the American is playing, because he doesn't have the money to go in. Cluzet is soaking wet, but his eyes shine and he listens to Dexter Gordon's music worshipfully. The French are pretty hard to take when they celebrate how much they love American art. You may come out with the feeling that Tavernier is proud of the gloomy dullness of the movie, that he sees virtue in it. With Sandra Reaves-Phillips, Lonette McKee, John Berry, Martin Scorsese, Philippe Noiret, and many well-known musicians. (D. W. Griffith.)

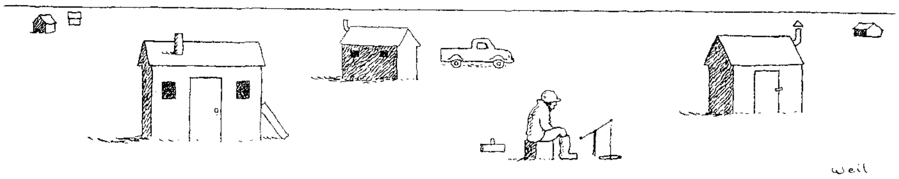
Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home—Things are fairly comatose in space, and you may start feeling passive and depressed, but then the seven crewmates travel from the twenty-third century back to twentieth-century San Francisco to save a pair of humpback whales, and the encounters there between the seven and the more primitive San Franciscans allow for a few modest jokes. Here's a typical scene: Chekov (Walter Koenig) has been badly injured and is unconscious in a hospital, where he is about to undergo an emergency operation. In order to save him from the barbarities of twentieth-century surgery, Bones (DeForest Kelley) hurriedly—and furtively—cures him by placing a small disk on his forehead. The scene is meant to be comic, but, with Leonard Nimoy directing, Chekov doesn't wake immediately—he wakes gradually; and when he's asked his name and rank he takes so long answering that any possible humor leaks out of the scene (which has no other reason for existence). Some of the kidding around is fairly lighthearted, and William Shatner's Kirk is less stoic here than in "III"—he's pleasantly daffy. The others in the crew also have an easy, parodistic tone. But the picture doesn't have much beyond the interplay among them and the jokey scenes in San Francisco. There's practically nothing to look at, and almost every effect involving the actors is too slow. Catherine Hicks is the teary-eyed marine biologist. (Embassy 1; through Feb. 19. . . . ¶ Embassy; Feb. 20-26. . . . ¶ New Embassy 49th Street; starting Feb. 27, evenings only.)

Strike Up the Band (1940)—Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney, that hard-to-forget teen-age vamp June Preisser, and Paul Whiteman and his orchestra in a musical directed by Busby Berkeley that is so poorly paced, and so loaded with sanctimonious moral lessons, that even the George and Ira Gershwin score doesn't save it. The script is like a noose around everybody's neck. Rooney is the drummer in the high-school band that turns itself into a swing orchestra, with Garland as the vocalist; the group is trying to raise money to compete in a national contest. With William Tracy, Larry Nunn, and Virginia Brissac. (Regency; Feb. 24-25.)

Swing High, Swing Low (1937)—A screwball comedy that tries to be effervescent and is merely overactive. Carole Lombard, Fred MacMurray, Jean Dixon, and Charles Butterworth look giddy and buzz around in bars in Panama and night clubs in New York. Mitchell Leisen directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 26.)

Thérèse—Shot in a diorama in a richly austere visual style—the actors appear against a mottled, opaque backdrop—this Alain Cavalier film is undoubtedly a feat of some sort. (But perhaps it's no more than an art curiosity.) It concentrates our attention on the bare, masterly images (lighted by Philippe Rousselot) that come out of the darkness, and on tiny sounds and whispered bits of conversation. The script, by Cavalier and his daughter, Camille de Casabianca, is a minimalist version of the story of the young girl who at fifteen got permission to enter the Carmelite order; she died of tuberculosis in 1897, at twenty-four, and was canonized and became popular as St. Theresa of Lisieux, the Little Flower of Jesus, and the model of the pure woman. (This is at least the fourth French movie she has inspired.) What Cavalier's version gives us is the beaming eagerness of a girl (Catherine Mouchet) who seems born to be a nun. She takes completely literally her marriage to Christ, and burns with love for her bridegroom. But Cavalier's formal, noncommittal style is so measured that after a while the film's austerity may begin to seem as repressive as the cloistered life. In French. (1/26/87) (Lincoln Plaza.)





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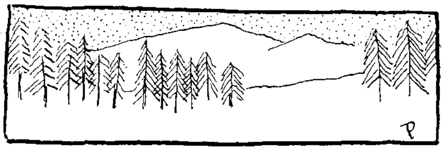
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

ACCORDING to the papers, President Reagan is having a hard time getting people to fill top positions in the White House. "The private sector," with its six-figure salaries, beckons to his staff, whose members have been leaving in considerable numbers recently; and possible replacements, discouraged by what one high official calls the new "passivity" at the White House, stay away. It's one more sign, if any were needed, of the precipitous decline in the political fortunes of President Reagan, who just a few months ago held sway over the American political scene with an almost kingly authority. Plainly, we are dealing with a shift of major proportions in the climate of public opinion. Few things in politics are more mysterious than such shifts. The Chinese used to seek explanations in the Mandate of Heaven. The Germans spoke of the Zeitgeist. We in the United States today speak of trends, of momentum, of buzzwords (the word "buzzword" itself being a buzzword). Considering what is at stake, it is not surprising that people are intensely interested in discovering what Heaven may be up to in this respect; and in our time a vast array of new instruments, including opinion polls and various news media, have been deployed to detect and report the slightest changes of mood. For the present shift, of course, a ready explanation is offered: the scandal of the secret foreign policies toward Iran, Nicaragua, and other places which were instigated by the White House staff. That explanation, however, may in fact be used to cover too much. It is easy to forget that, for example, the Democrats won back the Senate *before* the White House scandal broke. It may be that the scandal, by offering an obvious explanation for the shift, is actually masking changes of opinion which are occurring independently of it. Yet if we start to imagine that some major political upheaval was in the works prior to the scandal there is the much noted emptiness of the 1986 campaign and the pitifully low turnout of voters—estimated at thirty-seven per cent of the voting-age population—to disabuse us of such a conclusion. Nor has the scandal itself aroused great political passions. And if a part of the public has become disillusioned with the Reagan Administration the disillusionment apparently takes place within the context of a general decline of interest in public affairs. Certainly the Democrats don't seem to have had much to do with the tribulations of their opponents. The Democrats were anything but outspoken on the campaign trail, and even now prefer to remain in the shadows rather than step forward with bold ideas of their own. "There is an emerging consensus, but I don't think it's emerged yet," Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr., said, somewhat cryptically, the other day. "Mainly, there's a hunger to be together," he added. The buzzwords the Democrats have put forth—"competitiveness," "excellence"—are of singularly low voltage. They hardly buzz at all. Even in decline, Reagan seems more commanding than these opponents. His absence from the scene is larger than their presence on it. Reagan rose. Reagan fell. The Democrats seem to have had little to do with it. Nor do the public-opinion polls shed a clear light on the situation. They do reflect some defection from the views of the Reagan Administration; for example, they show a greater enthusiasm for federal spending on social programs than Reagan does. Yet it has always been a paradox of Reagan's Presidency that he has been popular even with those who disagreed with his positions on particular issues. In a curious way, he de-politicized the Presidency—he rose above politics, into a regal, mythical realm—and his decline has the feel of a return to politics, though it's hard to detect any real enthusiasm on the part of the public for this return. Is the shift, then, away from myth and toward reality? Is the real world, with its dreary problems, about to become chic? Whatever the answer to that question, the consequences of the shift are indubitably real. Nothing is less tangible than a change in the political climate, but upon such changes everything that is tangible in the political world—the expenditure of funds, the raising of public works, the deployment of forces, the rise and fall of the mighty—utterly depends. Yet these changes—changes that occur in our own hearts—elude the most sophisticated efforts at prediction. Now, as ever, Heaven works among us in secret, its ways unfathomable, its mystery intact.



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A FRIEND writes:

There's alleged to be forty million dollars missing in the Iran-weapons-sale affair, and our govt. doesn't seem to be much worried about it. I don't see a great foofaraw in the newspapers. I don't see Administration spokesmen issuing terse bulletins on television about how close they are to the arrest of malefactors and the recovery of sums. I don't see Burberried govt. ratcatchers with little electronic devices in their ears fanning out in all directions. Nobody, to my knowledge, has asked the governor of Texas for the loan of a Texas Ranger, which is what a prudent executive branch would do in the circumstances. The misplacement of this uninteresting forty million, although it is probably a ho hum to many of the so-called big players of this world, I find—well, irritating.

Incidentally, I called the Department of Justice in Washington (202 633-2000, if you need the number) to check on the situation and get a progress report, and the phone rang sixteen times before I gave up. I guess they're pretty busy at Justice. I hear that a lot of "little guys" have been defacing the new, intellectually impregnable W-4 tax forms by pouring taxpayer blood on them, and that's probably a federal offense, and I guess that's what they're handling over at Justice right now, since they're so busy they can't even answer the damn phone.

What's more peculiar about this forty-million deal is that I don't get any sense of *embarrassment* coming from our President, Mr. Reagan. It's as if he hadn't noticed. In his State of the Union speech he didn't say, "By the way, folks, about the forty million dollars of your money that seems to have, uh, gotten away from us here, I want you to know that we're leaving no stone unturned and that I have today instructed the Attorney General and the General Services Administration and my housekeeper to turn every possible stone, great or small, in the pursuit of this lost money that we're just worried sick about, here in the White House." He didn't say that, or anything like it.

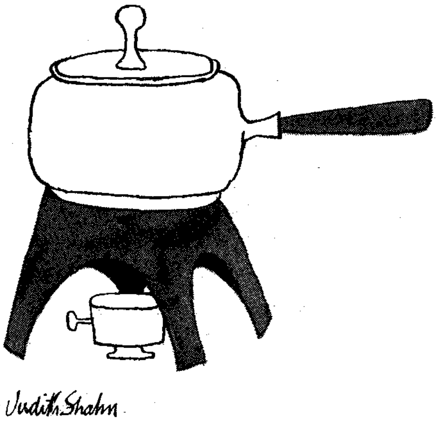
I remember years ago when I was working for a nonprofit institution and I couldn't find four hundred and fifty dollars. An associate and I went over and over all our bills and such, but we just couldn't find this four hundred and fifty dollars we were supposed to have. It was horrible. I lay awake nights for a week sweating about this four hundred and fifty dollars. We finally found it (we had paid an insurance premium and failed to enter the check in the checkbook), and my associate was so relieved that she hit me a sharp rap on the top of the head with her knuckles, as an old-time schoolteacher might. I understood what she was feeling. I don't propose this as an instance of an exemplary moral sense; it was just ordinary industrial-strength worry. That was a long time ago.

I know that the amount in question is only the lifetime earnings of a mere 58.7 citizens (figuring a hipshot average of thirty-five working years per citizen at an average yearly recompense of $19,460, on the basis of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* that I sleep with under my pillow), and about the lifetime earnings of a mere 58.7 citizens who cares? We could lose that many citizens and their lifetime earnings in a light freeze and still have two hundred and forty-two million citizens and *their* lifetime earnings to play with. I don't want to run this thing up all out of proportion. I just want some slight governmental expression of dismay.

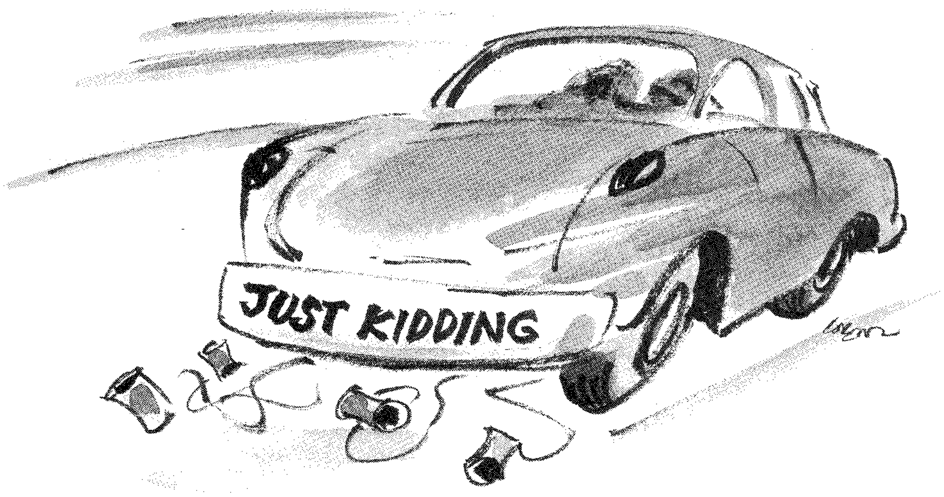
Stars & Stripes

LAST Tuesday morning, when the city held a parade up Fifth Avenue for Dennis Conner and the victorious crew of Stars & Stripes, we bundled up and went out and did a little dead reckoning. We calculated the wind on Fifth to be blowing sou'-sou'west-by-west at about eighteen knots. Perfect conditions for trash sailing. A wastebasketful of invoices dumped out of a twelfth-floor window at Forty-eighth Street, say, could soar on a single tack all the way to Fifty-seventh, where the parade ended. But not such good conditions for carrying around a pole with a toy kangaroo hung upside down from the end. The one such marsupial we saw needed more ballast to convincingly suggest the proper degree of symbolic defeat or aristocrat's-head-on-a-pike deadness.

The Stars & Stripes crew rode together on a Statue of Liberty float that was apparently left over from last July, and most were dressed in eye-catching red parkas and white ski hats, but we would have known them anyway just from their *tans*—deep, golden-brown tans, of a richness and lustre that seemed almost unearthly. (We looked around at our fellow-spectators, with their red cheeks and red noses, and concluded, sadly, that most New Yorkers couldn't acquire such tans even in a lifetime of sunning themselves with reflectors on upper Broadway.) Hours of bleary-eyed early-morning ESPN-watching last month enabled us to pick out from among the crew the composed and almost scholarly-looking face of Tom Whidden, Conner's tactician, who so often seemed to be leaning back in the cockpit and *thinking* about the race instead of actually participating in it; also the beefy bodies of Kyle Smith and James Kavle, the two grinders, who were always cranking away in the foreground as the spray seemed to dash right up against the inside of our TV. Conner himself was unmistakable, of course. His tan was even darker than everyone else's—practically mahogany-colored—and he wore two hats and had on a long fur coat over his parka. He seemed almost dazed as he looked around at the tall buildings and the storm of paper swirling down, and yet his smile, which he flashed almost constantly, was one of utter contentment. There could have been no happier man in either hemisphere that morning.



All the rest of us were pretty content, too—waving and thwack-thwacking our gloves together and greeting each other and the crew. As city occasions go, the parade was just about perfect in scale, and it went off without a hitch. There was the usual interval of photographic chaos right at the start, while Mayor Koch and Donald Trump, who helped pay for the parade, posed with the newly regained America's Cup. "Hey, hands off!" one man called out when Trump let his arm slide possessively around the ewer. "Sacrilege!" But then the police cleared the street, and a band from the Kings Point Merchant Marine Academy began tootling a short distance up the Avenue; a galleon on loan from Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade and filled with workers from the Robert E. Derecktor boatyard, the builders of Stars & Stripes, jibed from Forty-third Street onto Fifth, followed by a paddle wheeler loaded with Stars & Stripes friends and supporters; then came Conner and crew, holding the famous, gleaming Cup for all to see; and, finally, escorted by a fleet of Macy's employees dressed up as tugboats, Stars & Stripes herself began slowly, magically, gliding up Fifth Avenue. Well, not exactly—it was the retired British Cup campaigner Victory masquerading as Stars & Stripes, which was back in Fremantle, of course (and in our mind is still plunging through those startlingly blue antipodean seas), and the substitute yacht was riding on a huge flatbed trailer instead of sailing on the pavement. But she looked terrific all the same, her royal-blue hull polished to a sheen and her towering aluminum mast making jaws drop and necks arc for blocks around.



Pioneer

HERE are the main things that went wrong during the five months last spring and summer it took Ernie Bessette, a welder at a paper mill who lives on a farm in Fort Edward, in upstate New York, to drive to California in a covered wagon pulled by a team of Belgian draft horses: a horse died of "flash colic;" a domestic buffalo grazing in an Ohio field spooked the horses, and they tore off down the road; the right front tire (travelling on the highway shoulder, where people throw their Pepsi bottles) went flat nine times; Mr. Bessette suffered from a kidney stone in Rawlins, Wyoming; a tornado blew by; he hit a Wyoming town called Point of Rocks with ten dollars left and had to send the support team, including his new wife, home in a truck that had been following the wagon; "two of the weirdest people I ever met came up and asked if we believed in the fourth dimension, so I said, 'Yeah, sure, of course;' " and Johnny Carson, who had held out some hope at the start of the journey, decided not to put them on the air after all. ("He had a guy on who went to Auckland, New Zealand, by mistake, because he thought the pilot said 'Oakland,' " Mr. Bessette said.) Actually, what may have been Mr. Bessette's greatest feat, and one of the ways in which he most closely resembled the earlier pioneers, was his managing to attract absolutely no national press coverage. His trip was an actual experience. "Money was pretty tight the whole way. We weren't stopping in restaurants, or anything like that," Mr. Bessette said.

There were other obstacles, too; that is what pioneer stories are—tales of obstacles overcome. "People would say to me, 'The pioneers didn't have rubber tires on *their* wagons.' Well, they didn't have tractor-trailer trucks going by like bullets so close you could stick out your hand and lose it, either," Mr. Bessette said. We were sitting with him in Ar-Dee's Diner (where his daughter waits on tables), in Fort Edward, on a snowy Sunday, but we were looking at snapshots, and Mr. Bessette was getting wrapped up in his story, and it might as well have been the desert of the Great Basin in the middle of summer. "When we went west from Salt Lake City across the salt flats, it was ninety-seven miles between water holes," Mr. Bessette said. "It was so hot at nine in the morning that we were under the wagon cover begging for a truck to go by so we would get some breeze. There were other tough stretches, too. Often you'd come up to these nice stands of trees, or a stream, and you'd think, Why the hell didn't they just stop here?"

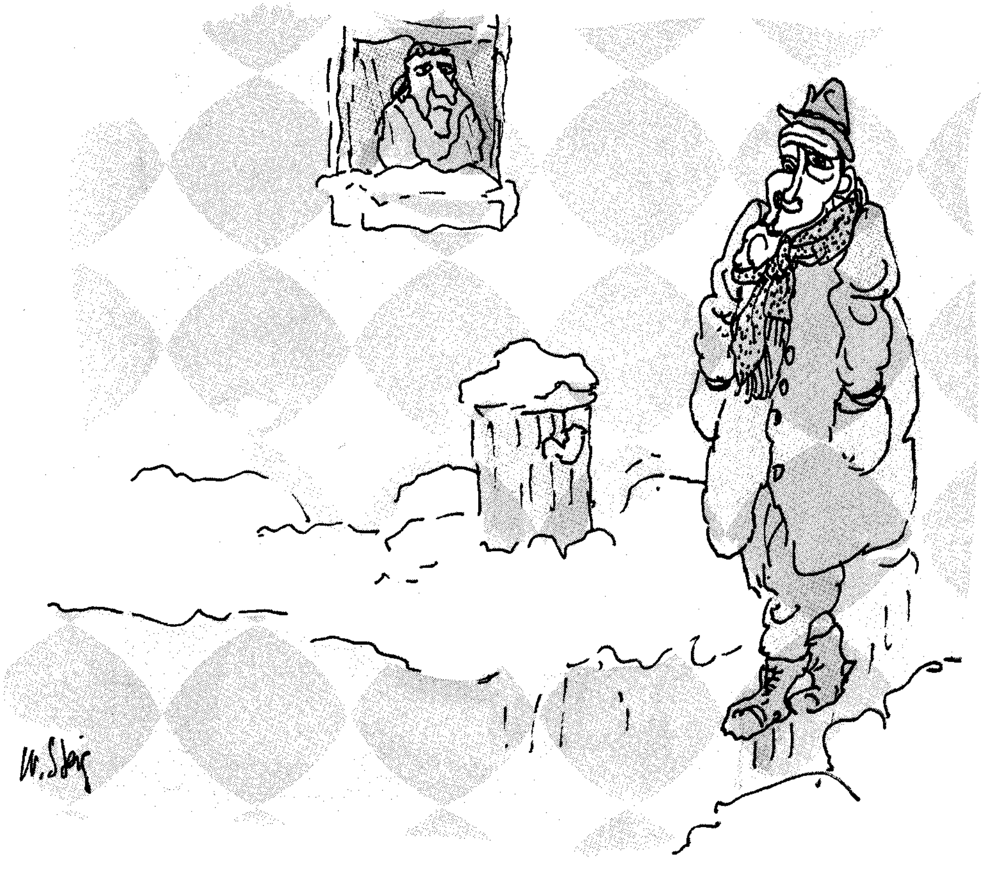
There was no special reason Mr. Bessette drove a covered wagon across America. He had driven his wagon to Fourth Lake, which is near Fort Edward, one day a couple of years ago. "I got my picture in the *Post-Star*, and a guy down at work saw it and said, 'Next, you'll be going to California.' That kind of stuck in my mind." He asked his supervisor for a leave of absence ("He said I might as well have one, since I'd taken leave of my senses") and began training his team in earnest. "The more you work with big horses, the more in tune they get," he said. "I've seen horses down in Amish country you wouldn't believe—I think those horses of mine would sit in this chair and eat with a knife and fork if they were told to. I got more and more confidence in them; I'd go by the firehouse and the whistle would blow and they wouldn't jump." A little later, he said, "These are the Arnold Schwarzeneggers of horses," introducing us to his surviving Belgians, Jim and Bill and Waylon, who live on his farm. They were wonderfully huge; the three of them standing on each other's backs would constitute a minor Alp. Having such horses around must be like having some Winnebago motor homes as pets.

And the country—especially the West, where Mr. Bessette had never been before—was beautiful, and that helped almost as much as the horses. "The wind would be blowing, blowing. It would be like a little whistle in your ear. And the horses would be chewing, and it all sounded like a symphony," he said. Most of all, though, there were the people Mr. Bessette came across—people who had not been hired by large corporations to appear in advertisements doing farm or factory work and then going to taverns and embodying the spirit of America. "You'd be riding, and it would be so cold and nasty, and you'd be really bummed out, and then people would stop and say, 'We just wanted our kids to meet you, because you represent America.' And when that happened you could take off your coat, you were so warm, and crow like a rooster. People brought us cakes and pies—homemade ones. One night, we were camped in a clay field in a cold rainstorm. Have you ever walked through a clay field? You walk from here to there and your boots weigh about fifty pounds. Well, this guy came right through the storm with a pineapple upside-down cake! Hot!" A lot of people gave Mr. Bessette caps and T-shirts and pennants, which he displays in a room in his house, along with books given to him by Mormons he met, and some other stuff. "People are the same all over, though when you get across the Mississippi the people in the store will say 'Can we put your things in a sack?' instead of 'in a bag.' And if they think you're thirsty they say 'Do you want a pop?' You say that around here and people duck."

Marketing

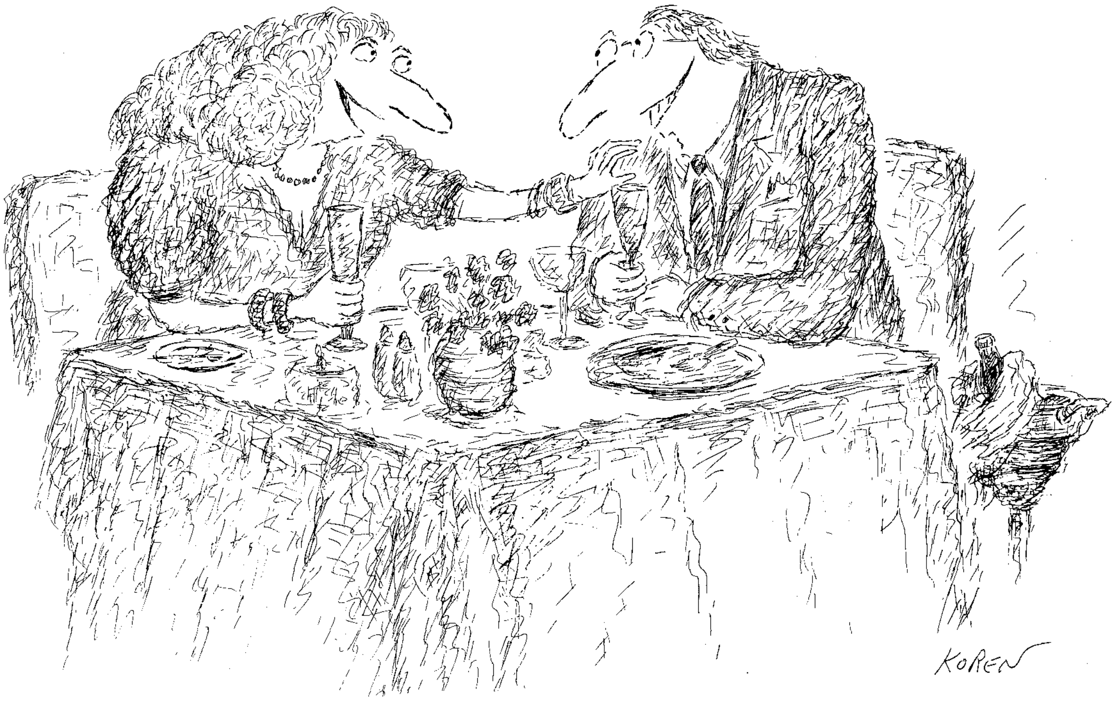
THE Eighty-fourth Annual American International Toy Fair was in town last week, and so was Stephen Schwartz, senior vice-president in charge of marketing for Hasbro, Inc., which—at twelve hundred million dollars' worth of the twelve-and-a-half-billion-dollar-per-year business as a whole—is the world's largest toy manufacturer. In the past few years, Hasbro, whose home is in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, has gobbled up Playskool, Milton Bradley, Ideal, and Child Guidance, among other formerly independent toy manufacturers, and brought them, still bearing their names, into the Hasbro "family." (Hasbro, Inc., was founded in 1923, in Providence, by three brothers—Henry, Hillel, and Herman Hassenfeld—who started in business by selling textile remnants, went on to making fabric-covered pencil boxes and other school supplies, and on from there to making paint sets and doctor-and-nurse kits. It came out in 1952 with Mr. Potato Head, the first TV-advertised toy; launched G.I. Joe in 1964; and now has a Hassenfeld grandson, Stephen Hassenfeld, as its president.) Mr. Schwartz keeps a wary eye on all the companies and their various products. Mr. Schwartz has favorites among his toys and among the people in charge of his toys, and he has special enthusiasms, he told us on the eve of the Toy Fair opening, but, he explained, he always, *always* keeps his main purpose uppermost in his mind: "My purpose is to market Hasbro's product."

Our quick but memorable marketing course with Mr. Schwartz—a young man with thick black hair and a black Groucho mustache, who is casual, swift-moving, and affable, and who has a B.A. in psychology (N.Y.U., 1971)—took place in Hasbro's newly acquired and newly renovated New York quarters, at 32 West Twenty-third Street. Hasbro occupies three levels of a six-story white building, formerly the Merchandise Mart, and has installed there, among other things, gray-green-violet custom-designed carpeting, indirect lighting, and a uniformed guard at a reception desk in a huge lobby decorated with a modern wall relief called "Full Moon." The first floor is given over to a hangarlike showroom of over twenty thousand square feet, displaying Hasbro's "product." As we talked with Mr. Schwartz, his marketing team from Pawtucket (forty people) and some workmen and Hasbro officials of one kind and another were scrambling around in the hangar, carrying and opening cartons of dolls and toys and games, and setting up canopies and corners and shelves and tables and banners and signs in modernist displays, colored, like the toys, in strident pinks and purples and greens aiming at mass attention. Hit products introduced two or three years ago were being placed in focus with their 1987 supplements: My Little Pony, already equipped with comb or brush, now has, among its new companions, a Princess Pony, five Twinkle Eyed Ponies, newborn Pony Twins, in a baby carriage, and Baby Pony, with First Tooth; Jem, the "rock 'n roll fashion doll," now has a 1987 water bed, in pink and blue, with real water (for $22.99), and some new clothes, including an overwhelming gold outfit, complete with gold mesh stockings and gold shoes and gold hair in flashing Mylar; G.I. Joe now has his own personal space shuttle (for $120); the Get in Shape, Girl! fitness program, endorsed by Mary Lou Retton, now has a blue T-shirt, pink-and-white toe shoes, and a six-foot-long purple practice balance beam. There were also brand-new 1987 toys, among them Slime Time Watches, covered with faces of bats or toads or snakes; Visionaries, warlike creatures spotted with strange holograms; and Moondreamers, five-and-a-half-inch plastic figures with hair that glows, in the dark, in screaming, sharp shades of gold and blue and green we have never seen anywhere else on earth. Nowhere in sight was Hasbro's 1986 failure—monsters called Inhumanoids. Playskool had been given a corner of its own in the hangar, with a lot of toys echoing Hasbro's, in plastic and plush and Mylar, but with a few old-time favorites, like colored wooden blocks, thrown in; Milton Bradley was in the corner opposite, offering new games, called things like Fireball Island and Thunder Road, along with, wonder of wonders, backgammon and checkers, and even chess.



Only a Month Till Spring

"The beauty of Hasbro is in its broadness," Mr. Schwartz told us. "This is my fourteenth Toy Fair, and I know already that the item I'm most in love with this year is Definitely Dinosaurs! I'm still fixed on My Little Pony, too. It's innocent. It's innocuous. The Baby Pony with the new front tooth, I love it. Playskool has Definitely Dinosaurs!, and now that



"Tonight, you're dessert!"

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Hasbro owns Playskool we'll see to it that the product *sells*. The figures are of plastic, some with jaws that move. The biggest and meanest of the dinosaurs, Tyrannosaurus, is only sixteen dollars and forty-five cents. Playskool for 1987 will also have Blankies and Funbrellas and Sweetie Pops dressing dolls—their heads and torsos can come off together and be put back on—and Jammie Pies. Soft dolls. Playskool's Jammie Pies will sell big. Jammie Pies are 'Baby's First Friends.' And Jammie Pies will have lots of licensees—Jammie Pie sheets, Jammie Pie lamps, Jammie Pie bags for diapers, all the stuff for the nursery. Of course, we want Playskool to still be *Playskool*." Mr. Schwartz gave us a friendly smile, his eyes as twinkly as a Twinkle Eyed Pony's. "We've left some carts, blocks, a few other wooden classics alone. After all, we want Playskool to still *look* like Playskool. But we'll get Definitely Dinosaurs! right in there with the old stuff. Wonderful. An aggressive preschool concept that won't turn mothers off."

We asked Mr. Schwartz whether Inhumanoids had turned mothers off.

"Nothing to do with mothers," he said. "It was a monster concept. Like King Kong. Like Godzilla. Bad guys, yes. But the bad guys sell. Inhumanoids didn't sell. It had nothing to do with human or inhuman. We don't think about concepts in that way. Maybe it was the size of the monsters. Maybe it was the price—up to thirty-six dollars. Last year, Coleco's Rambo didn't sell. Kenner's Centurians didn't sell. It had nothing to do with good or bad. Inhumanoids didn't sell, period. It was time to move on. You don't chase the losers."

Mr. Schwartz wiped his palms vigorously against the sides of his pants. "If you bat six hundred in this business, you're better than Mattingly," he said. "Every new category is a multimillion-dollar risk, with the tooling, the shooting of TV commercials, the TV programming based on our toys. You're into five or ten million dollars before you can come out with a new concept." He motioned with his head for us to follow him to the Moondreamers table. "Our brand-new concept for girls," he said. "A very sweet concept." We gathered that Moondreamers lived in space on Starry Up, with a place called Monstrous Middle between Starry Up and Down (Earth). Mr. Schwartz picked up Crystal Starr, the five-and-a-half-inch leader of the Starry Up inhabitants. She had on a sparkling above-the-knee sashed dress and a jewelled headband, and she had creepy-looking flowing, glow-in-the-dark long white hair. "Isn't she beautiful?" Mr. Schwartz said to us. "I love her. She will sell."

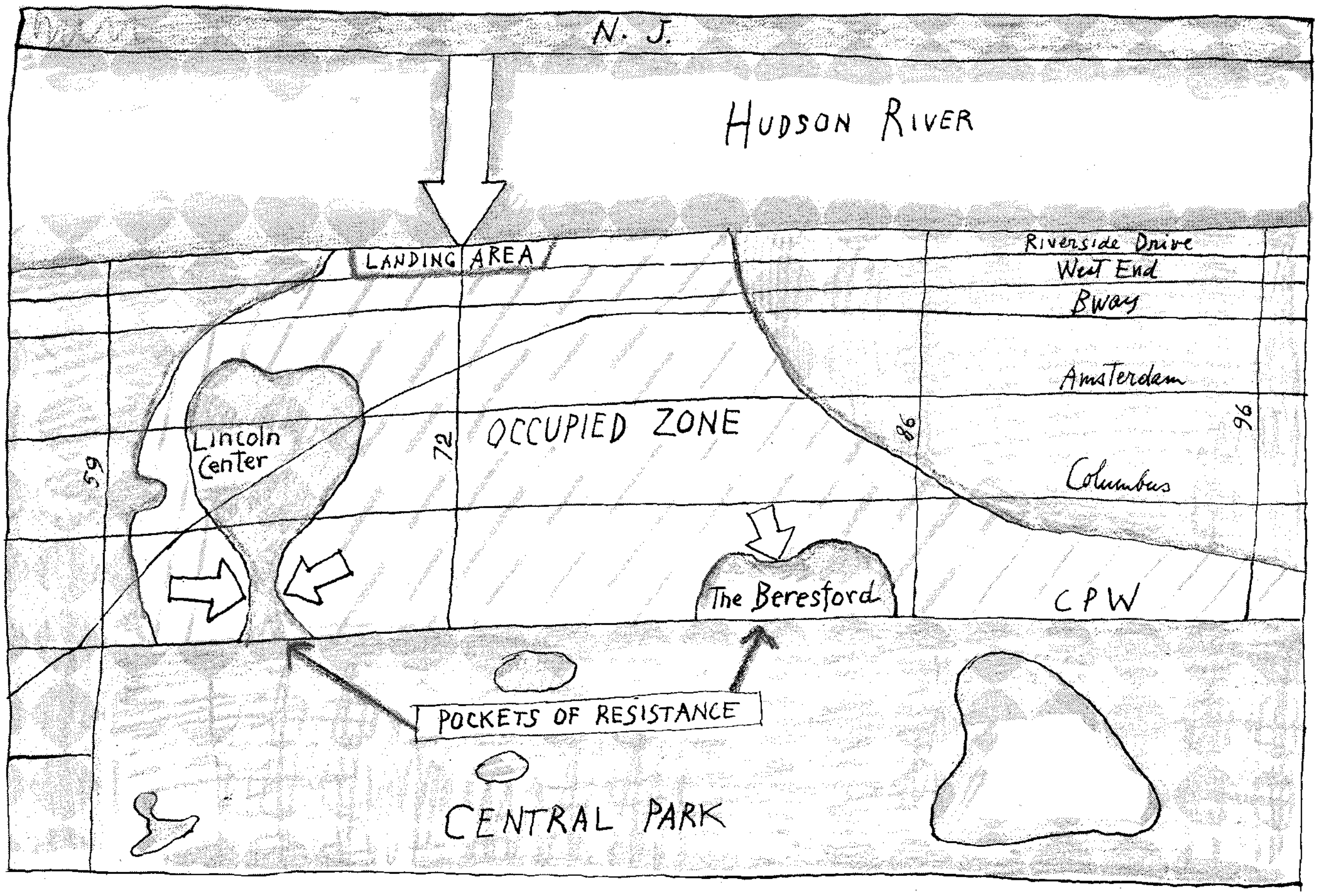
Mr. Schwartz moved us along to Jem, informing us that her Glitter 'n Gold Roadster, a two-foot-long vehicle resembling a cross between a Rolls and a Bugatti, was an improvement on the model introduced, for the first time, last year. "The colors are different, with the white, pink, and lavender, but it still has the same real FM radio in the trunk. But this year the wheels—look—are all in *gold*, with a lot of gold trim, the gold that matches Jem's glittering gold hair. Isn't she gorgeous?" Mr. Schwartz held up the Glitter 'n Gold Jem. We couldn't detect any fickleness in him. "In the doll wars, we sold three million Jems last year. We're scaring Barbie. I love Jem. But the Moondreamers really have got me this year. Also, the Moondreamers have their very own bad guys—Evil Scowlene and her Sleep Creeps, from Monstrous Middle. Bad guys in girls' toys usually don't sell, but I think Evil Scowlene will sell. My Little Pony doesn't have *any* bad guys in the toys—only in the TV program, because there have to be bad guys in TV programs or the kids won't watch. Jem's musical group, The Holograms, have adversaries—The Misfits, a harder-rock band. Winning is everything to The Misfits." Mr. Schwartz did not burden us with a moral view of this attitude in any way. "The Misfits sell as much as The Holograms," he said.

Last stop: the Visionaries, peculiar warrior figures with actual holograms on their shields or on winglike parts of alarming vehicles they drive. "Futuristic medieval knights," Mr. Schwartz said—rather objectively, except that the Twinkle Eyed Pony look was back in his eyes. "Look at this hologram," he said, showing us a battering-ram vehicle with the hologram on one side. "Look at the way it changes from a figure of a man to a skeleton—now, isn't that beautiful?" He looked away for a moment in order to locate a marketing-team member who was scurrying around with a carton of Visionaries. "Hey, Bob!" Mr. Schwartz called. "Which ones are the good guys?"

"Spectral Knights!" Bob called back. "Versus Darkling Lords!"

"Whichever," Mr. Schwartz said. "Both will sell."

THE WAR WITH NEW JERSEY


N. J.
HUDSON RIVER
LANDING AREA
Riverside Drive
West End
Bway
Amsterdam
OCCUPIED ZONE
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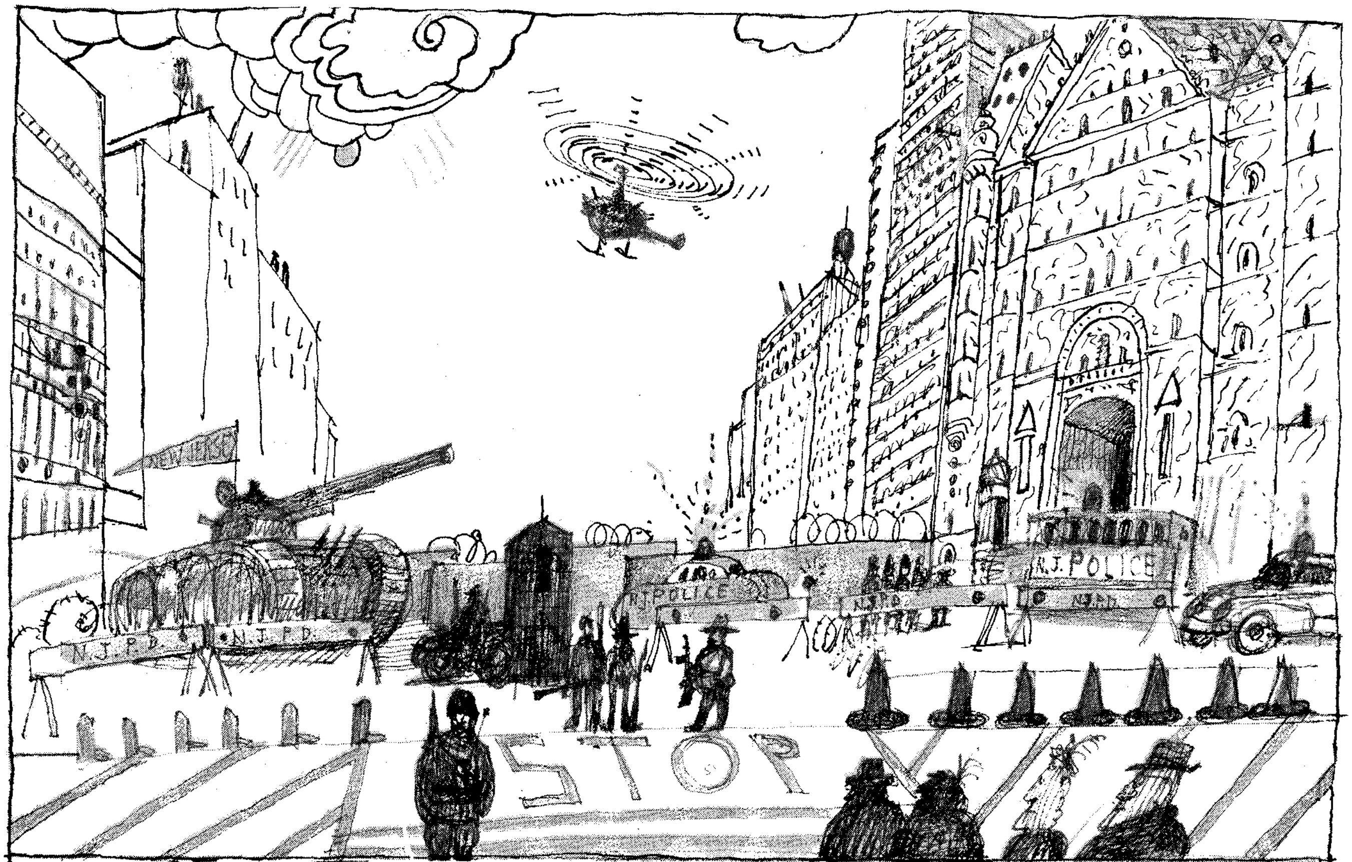
POCKETS OF RESISTANCE
CENTRAL PARK


NEW JERSEY
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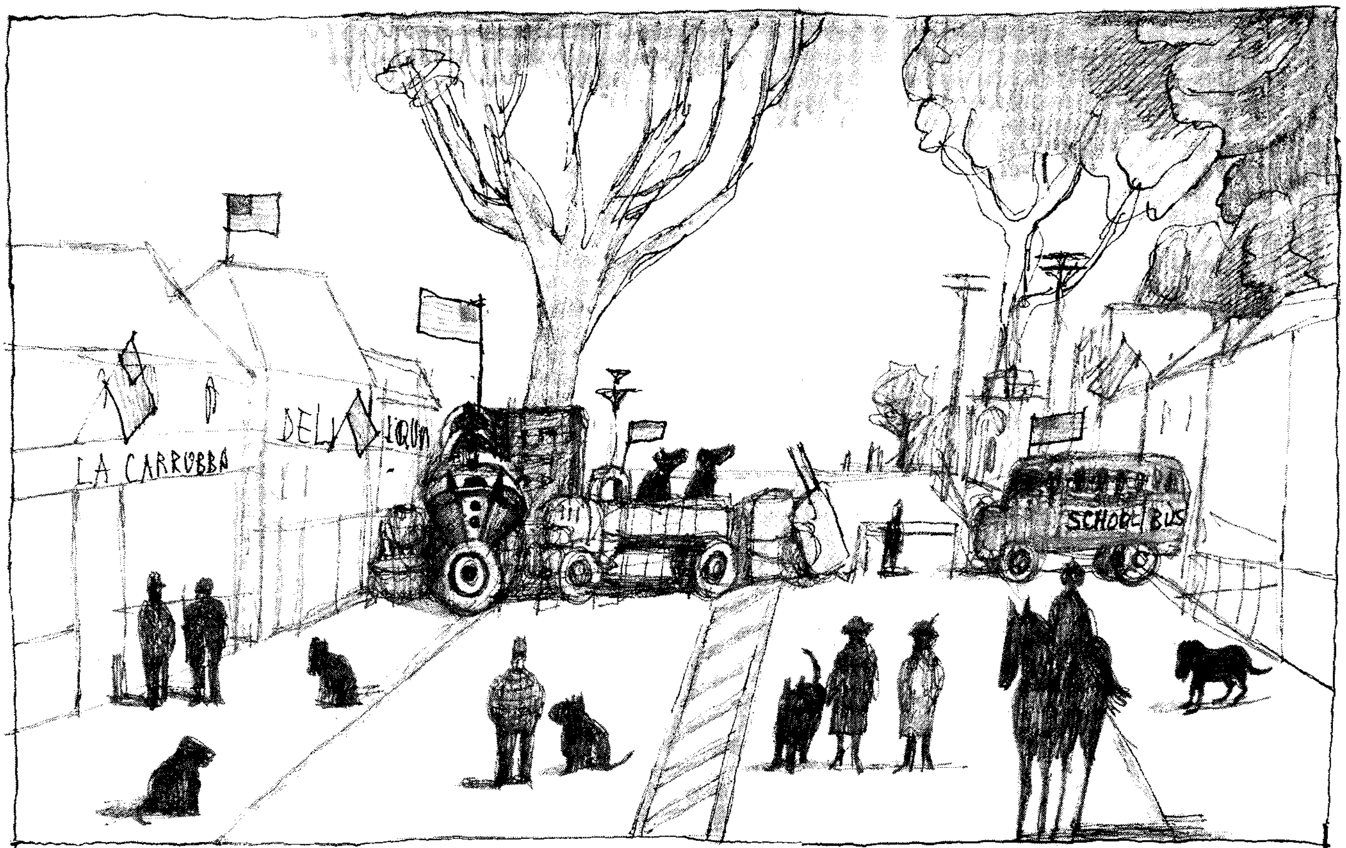
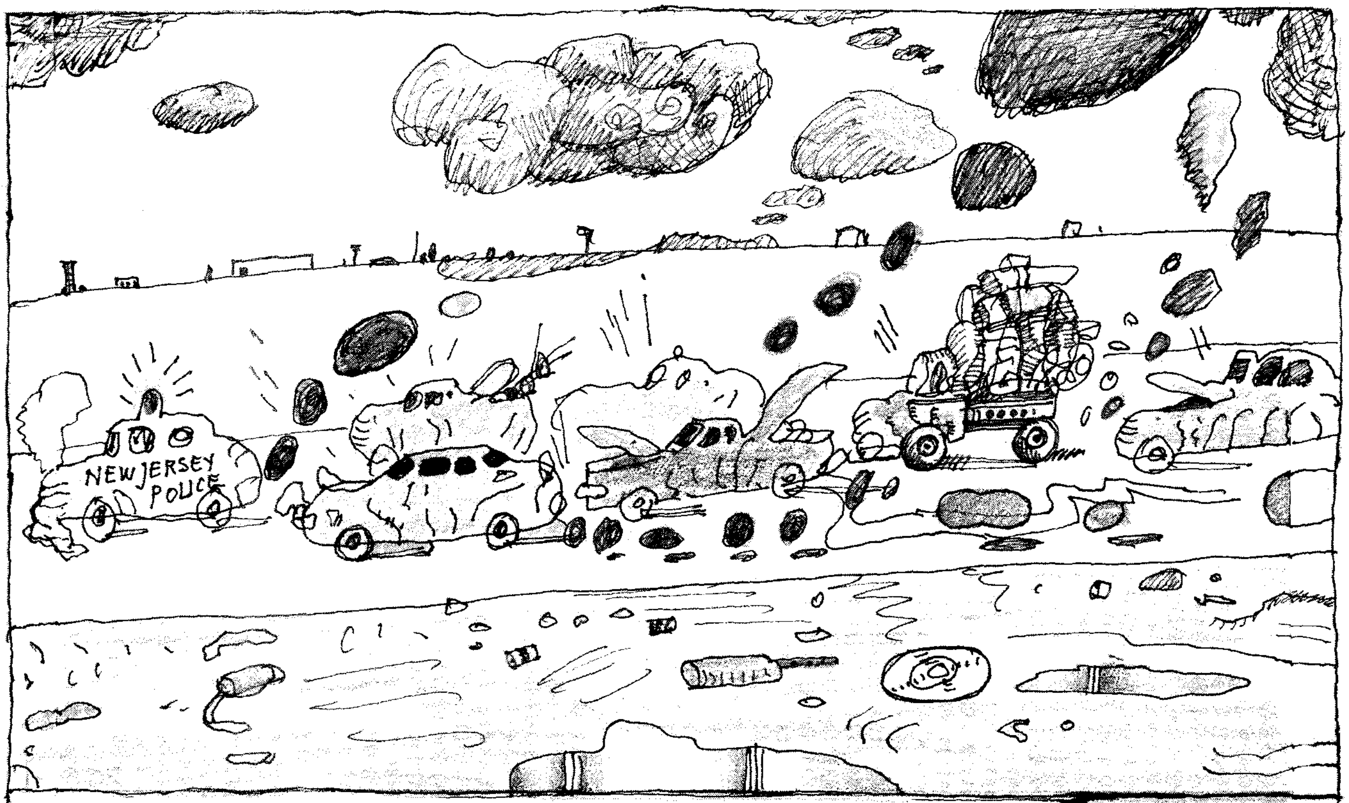
STOP

THE DAKOTA CROSSING
Crossing to the occupied West Side during a brief ceasefire


LA CARRUBBA
DELI
LIQUOR
SCHOOL BUS

AMAGANSETT
Main Street barricade and volunteers


NEW JERSEY POLICE

VICTORY PARADE
The New Jersey cars taking possession of the Long Island Expressway

STEINBERG

WORLD EXPO LARRY 'N' DOT '87: AN APPRAISAL

IF the Great White City at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 was architectonically all frosted coconut layer cake fresh from a Beaux-Arts oven, then its latter-day descendant at Apt. 4-B, 2377 Gilbertson Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is, taken altogether, not.

This reviewer ponders World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87 and conjures images, instead, of Sofia and the Pan-Balkan Congress of 1910: intimate, informal, entirely indoors. By the same token, or one tantalizingly like it, this reviewer is brought to the brink of declaring World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87 to be the first elevated world exposition—that is, until the shade of Hum der Woop, he of the Utrecht Movement and its dictum that Flemish Man "must forever hover betwixt Herring and Heaven," bids us remember his visionary 1928 Antwerp Festival, levitating there above the marshes on compressed air and faith.

Yet fair, especially when it comes to world's fairs, is fair; not even Hum provided *anything* akin to the self-service elevator that in seconds lofts the World Expo Larry 'n' Dot visitor four stories above the earth, debouching into a Vestibule of the Visitors, which, with its faux philodendra and faux fin-de-siècle velveteen wall coverings and faux glass demi-chandeliers, almost, if not quite, summons forth—albeit in microscale—after-images of the Grand Foyer with which Kadeck pulled out all the Jugendstil stops in his Palace of the Isthmuses at the 1900 Geneva Centurium.

A gonglike Musical Door Chime heralds the transition from Vestibule to Expo proper, through the first and most formal of a series of rectangular framings that both separate and connect the various theme areas within. The over-all Expo layout insistently calls to mind nothing so much as the never-built Chilean Pavilion at Toledo's Ohio Jubilee of 1891—in other words, a mortised set of essentially boxlike spaces within a box, set in turn within the larger box of the host structure.

Spatial amplitude has been, in the main, eschewed; the theme of World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87 is, after all, "The World of Larry 'n' Dot" and not the "Man! Nature! Universe! Perfect!" of the 1901 Leipzig Global Lifefest. A scale cozy and human is clearly called for here. All the more pity that an austere rectangularity rules the spaces within World Expo Larry 'n' Dot, and in so doing forces us to accommodate its crony, the corner. Four such visual dead ends mar each theme area, occurring inevitably just at the point where two verticals intersect—an abrupt effect that not even lacy cobweb hangings can efface. Meanwhile, overhead are horizontal plastered planes, pressing down upon the senses and forcing the eye to seek its own level.

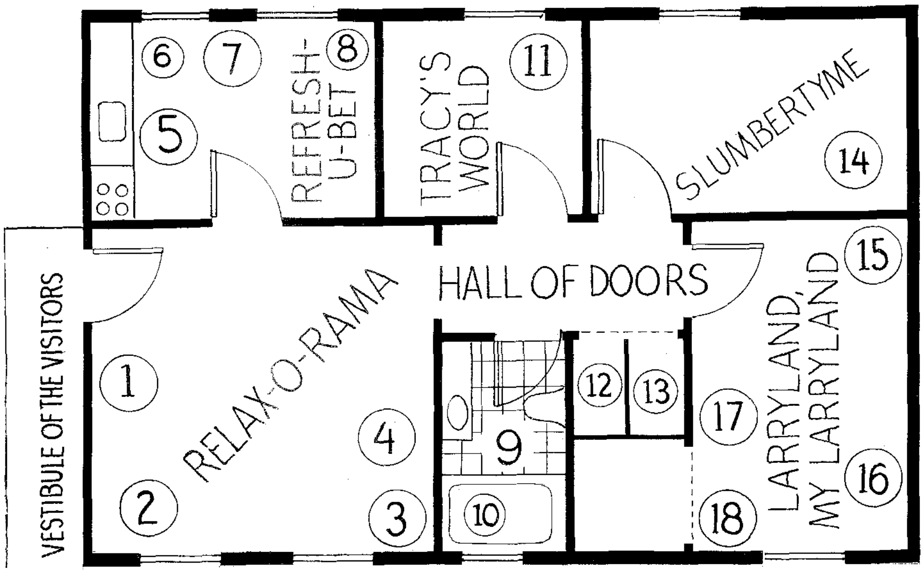
THE initial World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87 theme area to be encountered, Relax-O-Rama, is also the largest. One proceeds on foot along Broadloomway, wending a path between Larry's Throne ("The World's Only All-Naugahyde Queen Anne Reclining Swivel Rocker") and such fixtures of the World of Larry 'n' Dot as the Ottoman Empire ("Footstool Fashions from Yesteryear to Yesterday") and Dot's Spot ("The World's Only Other All-Naugahyde Queen Anne Reclining Swivel Rocker").

A pair of ceramic elephants in the Knickknack Knook wittily mimics, in miniature, the sculptural gigantism and beast-worship that so proliferated in nineteenth-century American exposition ornamentation. Could Larry 'n' Dot have been thinking of Runciman's 22-ton "Spirit of Man's Best Friend" bronze pug, in the Court of the Actuaries at the Kansas City Prairie Exhibition of 1890, and winking?

Both Broadloomway and Relax-O-Rama abruptly terminate at the next of those framed rectangular archways, giving on a shimmering sea of Spanish Ochre Congoleum designed to signal that the visitor has arrived at Refresh-U-Bet. Here, at Make Mine Microwave!, the famished fairgoer can receive his food almost faster than he can order it, or create his own snack a few steps away at the freestanding Sandwich Islands food bar. Surfaces hard and cool to the touch are done up in pre- and post-Populuxe hues under Refresh-U-Bet's relentlessly fluorescent light, evoking semi-automatic memories of Pentti Roummi's eye-dazzling "Exercise in Wax" at the 1936 Helsinki Millennium of the Finnish Dwelling Exhibition. But Refresh-U-Bet is redeemed from sterility by the prudent injection of kitsch, much as Von Tomp saved his cryptlike Machine Hall at the 1926 Berlin Diesel Fair from utter visual desolation by the inspired use of embroidered satin throw pillows. Their equivalent here is Spoons of Many Lands, a glittering, intricate, glass-covered fan of souvenir spoonery—"A 'Stirring' Tribute to International Amity," as it is billed—on permanent loan to World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87 from the personal collection of Dot.

The Hams Across the Border exhibit in the nearby Breakfast Nook of the Diners is another expression of that familiar friendship-among-all-peoples ideal, rendered in this instance in the ham idiom, via slices carved into the approximate geographical outlines of Poland, Canada, and the United States. Its legend, "Just Goes to Show That Hams, and One Day Maybe Folks, Too, Can Coexist for the Common Good—in This Case, Good Eats," is exceptional solely in World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87's claim that it stands as the longest sentence ever written in cloves.

The use of a tunnel-like connecting passage between one exhibit and another in a world-exposition layout is the opposite of novel, dating back as it does to 1887 and Sir Humphrey Cronkwright's stygian labyrinth of corridors linking the six Great Chambers of the Manchester Ironmongery Fair. Something of the same idea is taken up in World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87's long, narrow, dimly lit Hall of Doors, reached by turning left at the exit (so recently the entrance) of Refresh-U-Bet and following straight along the Parquet Pathway, "The World's Narrowest Boulevard." One here encounters World Expo Larry 'n' Dot's sole digression into art, in the form of the permanent "The Family of Larry and Dot" exhibit of works by the contemporary Sentimental Realist photographer Larry. The Hall of Doors, unrelieved by light either natural or artificial, casts a lowering gloom over "Tracy's First Pony Ride!" and "Dot Thinks She's Esther Williams" and myriad other matted and framed sunlit vignettes. Indeed, the effect recalls those dankly brood-



HIGHLIGHTS OF WORLD EXPO LARRY 'N' DOT '87

1. **Larry's Throne**
2. **Ottoman Empire**
3. **Knickknack Knook**
4. **Dot's Spot**
5. **Make Mine Microwave!**
6. **Sandwich Islands**
7. **Spoons of Many Lands**
8. **Hams Across the Border**
9. **H_2O? A-O.K.!**
10. **All-Porcelain Tub of Baths & Man-Made Monsoon**
11. **Musical Radio, Musical TV, Musical CD Player, Musical Headset, Musical Tape Deck, Musical VCR**
12. **Haunted Closet**
13. **Carnival in Cloth**
14. **The Thirty-nine Winks**
15. **Joyride to Nowhere**
16. **Roll Over, Beethoven**
17. **Mini-Masters Tiny Tournament of Champions Putt-Off**
18. **"I'm Larry. She's Dot. That's Tracy. Sit, Beethoven"**

ing loggias with which Glebus flanked his city of Naphtha at the Oslo Grand Exposition seventy-two years ago.

"The Laving of Neptune," Snelgrove's self-watering iron sculpture in the Idaho Lagoon at the New Orleans Mississippi Jubilee in 1896, was the first, and remains in many minds the last, word on high-pressure faucetry as a visual focal point in an expositionary context. Against this, the H_2O? A-O.K.! theme area at World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87 can offer only the All-Porcelain Tub of Baths, "Featuring the World's Smallest Waterfall," and (for those plucky enough to stand beneath it) the Man-Made Monsoon, with its alternating overhead torrents of boiling and freezing water. But squint and the You Water Be in Pitchers exhibit ceases being merely a gaggle of odd-sized ceramic vessels on a shelf and becomes a frieze, a tableau, a shiny skyline of voluptuous shapes, irresistibly evocative of Elsie DeVole's ramped and starkly silhouetted "Parade of the Metal Lathes" in the U.S. Noise building at the 1949 Cleveland Heavy Industries Bazaar. Or does it? Is it, perhaps, just a gaggle of odd-sized ceramic vessels on a shelf? Before one has had time to decide, the human whirligig that is a world-exposition throng has spun one out of the H_2O? A-O.K.! exhibit area and face to face, across the Parquet Pathway, with an outsize "Knock Before Entering!" placard.

We are poised at the portal to Tracy's World, where the home environment of a typical American teenage female of the late nineteen-eighties is created with breathtaking realism in a twelve-by-twelve-foot "living diorama" more authentic than the costliest replica. Here the waxworks artifice of most re-creations (one recalls, with a shudder, the hydraulic Stanley greeting the pneumatic Livingstone sixty times per hour in the Exploratorium at the 1936 Cairo World's Fair) is almost entirely avoided in a celebration of the disjointed, the random, the found. Nothing here appears to enjoy a firm grip on the permanent—save, perhaps, the decibels generated nonstop by the Musical Radio, the Musical TV, the Musical CD Player, the Musical Headset, the Musical Tape Deck, and the Musical VCR.

"Bitte nicht stören," "Silence, s'il vous plaît!" Festooned with Do Not Disturb signs in six languages, the Enchanted Doorknob that offers entry to the Slumbertyme theme area bars entry to Slumbertyme. Its promised "non-psychedelic head trip," the Thirty-nine Winks, must be pronounced a World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87 promise left unkept.

The diversions of the Haunted Closet ("Something's in there, but nobody knows what it is!") and—staged within an adjacent walk-in niche—Carnival in Cloth ("The All-Garment Salute to the Same-Day Dry Cleaners, One Hour Martinizers, and Invisible Weavers of the Free World") are but sideshows en route to Larryland, My Larryland, the final theme area of World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87.

Larry's Exerbike, offering its Joyride to Nowhere, epitomizes Larryland, My Larryland's emphasis on the stimulation of "participatory" amusement. Less participatory than the 1969 Petaluma Festival of the Cosmos, of course—the first and, to date, the last build-it-yourself world exposition—but with tactile and other sensory experiences aplenty, Larryland, My Larryland offers the Mini-Masters Tiny Tournament of Champions Putt-Off; What's on TV? 36-Channel Video Roulette; and Roll Over, Beethoven ("Canine Pranks Aplenty from the Pooch That Begs in Every Language"). And, in honor of the ninety-sixth anniversary of Thomas Edison's invention of the Kinetoscope, the chance not only to view "I'm Larry. She's Dot. That's Tracy. Sit, Beethoven," the longest 8-millimetre home movie ever made, but also to thread the film *and* operate the projector.

Finally, one takes one's leave of World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87 sensible, if not wholly and uncritically admiring, of what has been achieved not within square miles but within square feet; and what if what has been achieved in fact remains a tantalizing conundrum? Has not every world exposition since the original Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 posed the same ultimate question: Why? And the same ultimate reply: Why not? The architectonically aware will continue to ponder and debate the issue long after World Expo Larry 'n' Dot '87 has officially closed its door, and in so doing will bring about what is after all the first duty of all architecture: to fill space. —BRUCE MCCALL

THE BLUE ROOM

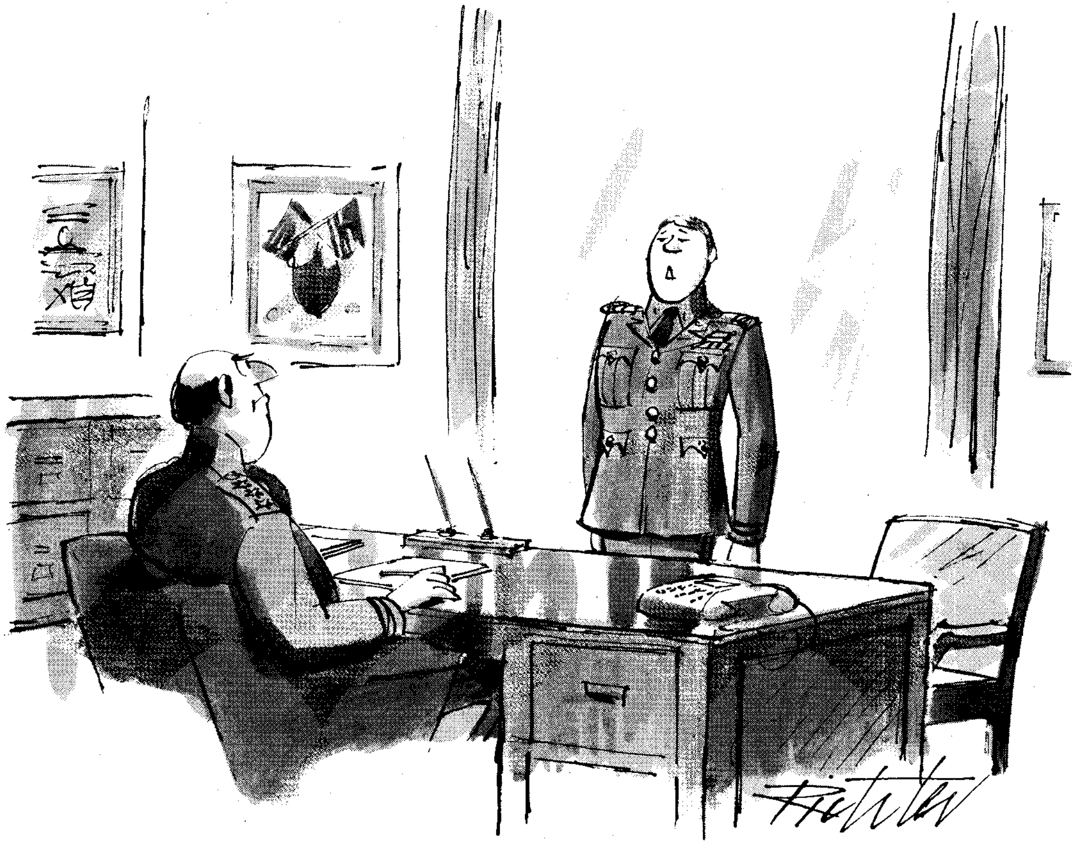
WHEN my wife and I came to New York, five years ago, we moved into a studio on East Eighty-seventh Street—a single, nine-by-eleven room. Not an apartment, really, but a room out of a popular song of the twenties or out of Trollope's "The Three Clerks": a blue room, lodgings. Its sole conventional attraction was its view. Our room looked down onto the stained-glass windows in the apse of the Rhinelander Church of the Holy Trinity, on East Eighty-eighth Street, a French Gothic Revival building in sandy brick, whose sleek, ornate tower is said to have influenced skyscraper design in lower Manhattan. The church spire has a clock and a belfry, and for three years it struck our hours from seven in the morning until ten every night.

In our first week in our room, we went across the street and into the church to look at the other—the interior—side of the stained-glass windows. They were worth a visit: exceptionally complex devotional images—a Crucifixion, an Ascension—done in an appealing but precious style that we then thought of as "Pre-Raphaelite" but that I have since learned is a broader, Anglo-American academic style, which also drew on Quattrocento painting. (I had come to New York to study at the Institute of Fine Arts, where they teach that sort of thing.)

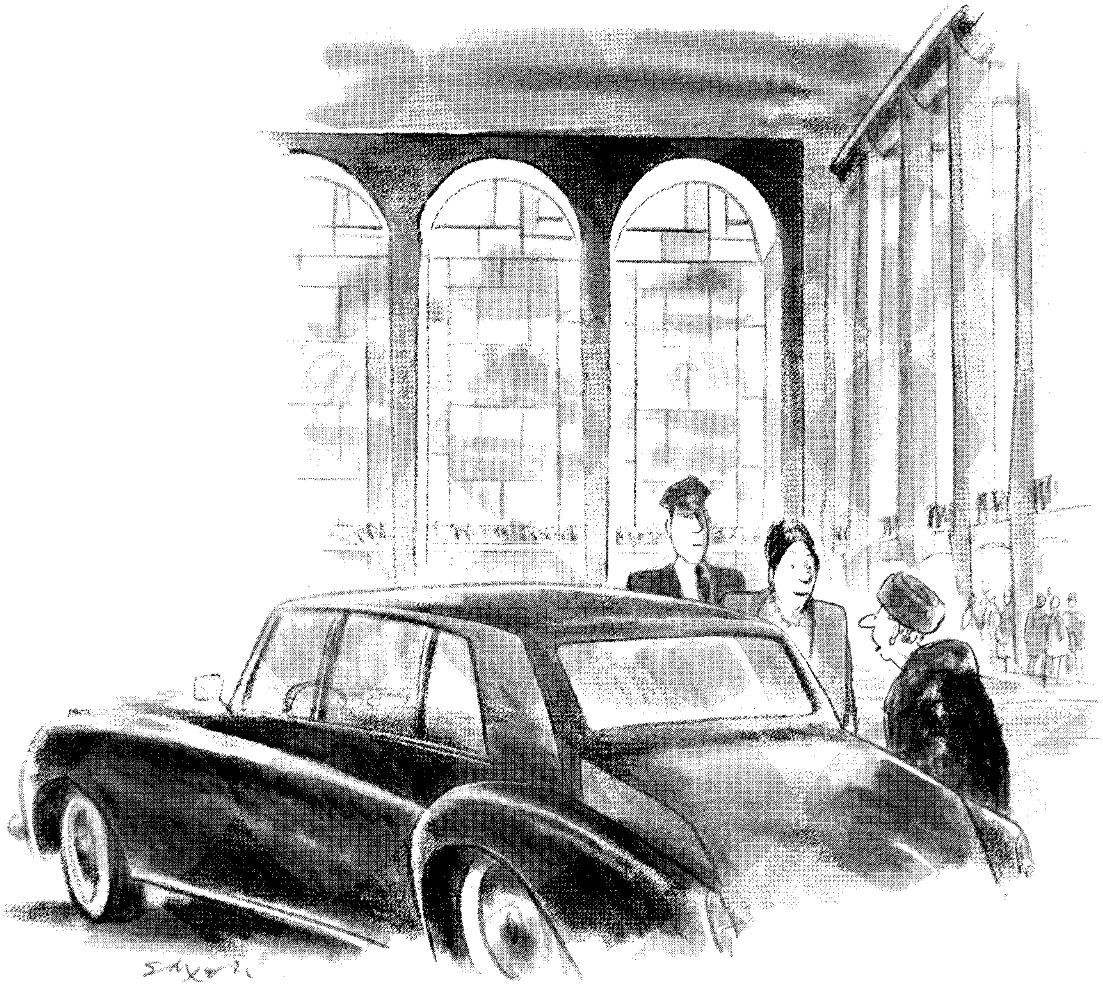
The church tower counted our hours, and its windows illumined our mornings. Like so many drawn to the city by its energy and intensity, we very soon found ourselves drawn to quiet havens and small moments neither energetic nor intense. I suspect that this is a recurring pattern among settlers to the city. The Chrysler Building beckons; the I.R.T. instructs; the Finley Walk consoles. The church tower and its windows came to symbolize this retreat, and at times almost seemed to be radiating a benevolent, Victorian influence into our lives, like that pulsating electrical tower at the beginning of old movies from R.K.O. In part because we had no choice—our room was in one of those upper-East Side canyons that are as shut off from broadcast television as Lhasa, and we couldn't afford cable—reading aloud became our favorite, our only, diversion, and our favorite books the talky reminiscences and eccentric fictions of nineteenth-century London. We had come in search of Baghdad and instead found a cathedral close.

Of all our reading in those years—Trollope, Jerome, Collins—the book we liked most was the most obscure: the autobiography of Molly Hughes, whose three-volume record of the life of a middle-class London family in the last thirty years of the last century—"A London Child of the Seventies," "A London Girl of the Eighties," and "A London Home in the Nineties"—came to seem to us the most perfect and moving record of ordinary life in English. I found the first volume of the trilogy in a secondhand bookstore in Montreal, where it may have been left by a British émigré. It seemed the kind of book Martha, my wife, might like, and so I brought it home and began to read it to her. "A London Child" tells of the life of a London stock-dabbler, Tom Thomas, his wife, Mary, and their five children as recalled by their youngest child and only daughter, Molly. It's "David Copperfield" from the point of view of the Micawber children. "We were just an ordinary, suburban, Victorian family, undistinguished ourselves and unacquainted with distinguished people," Molly says at the beginning of her book. She writes, simply and vivaciously, of the life she shared with her four brothers, Barnholt, Vivian, Tom, and Charles; of going to the Criterion Theatre, in Piccadilly Circus, and supper at the grill in the theatre afterward (with a glass of wine to add "that touch of diablerie"); of walking a mazelike route of side streets from Canonbury to St. Paul's on Christmas Day; of going on excursions up the Thames to Kew—a whole world of small comforts that, so far as I know, was captured in paint exactly once, by the (genuine) Pre-Raphaelite Ford Madox Brown in his picture "An English Country Afternoon."

Unlike most English people, Molly's family liked pictures as much



"Sir, I've been debriefed, deprogrammed, and debugged. May I go home now?"



"Beethoven hasn't changed, and neither have I."

as books. Her brother Charles intended to become an artist, and Molly was a skillful and fanatic sketcher. (A few of her drawings are reproduced in her books.) Still, the pictures that meant the most to her weren't paintings but the illustrations to Lewis Carroll's books and poems—not only the drawings of Tenniel but also those of Henry Holiday, who illustrated "The Hunting of the Snark." (Though not as famous or quite as good as Tenniel's illustrations, Holiday's are remarkably evocative, and have much the same mixture of meticulous, crosshatched realism and mad fantasy.) Carroll was the presiding deity of Molly's childhood, and the particular quality of Molly's passion for "Alice" reminded my wife and me that the current fashionable interpretations of "Alice," which imagine that Alice somehow represented to Victorian children subversive illogic and irrationality penetrating an oppressive veil of rationality, are in fact the direct reverse of the truth. For Molly, Alice was instead a kind of polite Enlightenment fury, the spirit of reason perpetually triumphing over arbitrary authority, rote learning, and superstitious reverence for adult intelligence. Molly's comments on the books she was made to read as a child, even the Bible, are clearly and delightfully influenced by Alice's spirit of firm but polite skepticism. My favorite is Molly's comment on her reading of Jesus' last words, when the Passion itself is transformed into a moment out of "Alice": "What a pity, I thought, that after such a good life He should have told an untruth at the last. This is what I read: 'Jesus just tasted the vinegar, and said, "It is finished." ' My idea was that he had been given this horrid stuff to drink, tasted it, and then out of politeness pretended that he had finished it up."

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One of the nicest, and most Micawberish, things about "A London Child" is the relationship between Molly's parents. "Never mind, Mary," Molly's father says after a particularly hard reversal in the City. "Whatever happens you and I are in the same boat—so nothing matters." But "A London Child" ends tragically. Molly's father is run over and killed in a railway accident. ("During the years that followed [my mother] used to sit in the dusk, in a chair facing the gate. . . . I think she almost hoped that the past was only a nightmare, and that she would surely see my father coming up the garden path with his springy step, and would hear his familiar knock.")

Martha and I liked "A London Child" so much that I went searching for the two other volumes at the Argosy and the Strand, and finally found them. It turned out that after her father's death Molly's life was very hard. Her father had left no money, and so all of the children had to put aside their larger ambitions and go to work. (Molly became a teacher.) Charles dies, of a sudden illness, in his twenties, just as he is finally about to find time to paint; Barnholt becomes a sailor, and dies in South America. Molly is courted by a very good, very poor young lawyer—a clerk, really—named Arthur Hughes. After an agonizingly long engagement, they marry and have an incandescent little girl named Bronwen. But Bronwen dies, too, suddenly and cruelly, just after her first birthday. And, finally, in an unspeakable irony, Arthur is killed in the same kind of accident that claimed Molly's father.

And yet Molly resolutely shook off despair. As we neared the end of her trilogy, we realized that she had written all three books as an old lady, living alone in the nineteen-thirties in a cottage in the suburbs. But she had kept to the end all the clarity and mischief of a happy child. I suppose there is something sentimental in Molly's writing, but sentimentality in such circumstances seems a way of organizing harsh and perplexing experience, as imposing and admirable as classical stoicism or medieval chivalry or modern irony. What Molly wrote in tribute to her mother was true of Molly, too: "[She] had braved her full share of tragedy, and yet had always managed to suck merriment from the least cheerful surroundings."

IN the year and a half that it took us to read all three volumes, our feeling for Molly passed from the recreational to the enthusiastic to the obsessive. We began to look forward to the end of the evening, when we could unfold our foam sofa bed and return to Molly. All the disturbances of the city continued outside our window, but we felt isolated and safe, as if Eighty-seventh Street were a river, and our room a raft. In those days, Martha was taking classes at the Parsons School of Design, and on weekday nights I would meet her at Thirteenth Street and Fifth Avenue, and we would walk south and then east across Broadway, past the Grace Church, at Tenth Street, and then into Astor Place to take the subway home. (Martha had learned to abide much in New York, but she drew the line at the Fourteenth Street subway station.) We would brood about Molly and her four brothers, and at such moments we began to feel not estranged from but curiously at one with our adopted city: Molly's London soothing the rawness of the I.R.T., the stench of the I.R.T. saving our vision of old London from mere preciousness. The vision even made something significant of the absurdity of our apartment: we had found the only room around as small and peculiar as Victorian lodgings.

My wife had still more from Molly, for she came to feel that in some way Molly's experience was *her* experience, and Molly's mother *her* mother. "She entered with zest into every detail of my work, and . . . had a quick eye, too, for anything amusing that we came across during our tramp, and best of all she managed to see beauties in the clouds and shadows and perspective of the streets and buildings." I read these words of Molly's to Martha late one night (she was half asleep) and heard her murmur, "That's so true. That's true." And then, as the months wore on, our experience of Molly's world seemed to us less an imaginative alternative to our world and more an extension and equivalent of it. Molly's experience came to seem to us utterly true to our own experience of New York. We borrowed the forms of Molly's experience to make sense of our own, rather in the way (as Martha once pointed out) that the artist of our stained-glass windows had borrowed the forms of the Quattrocento. For if the New York of our immediate world seemed warm and delimited, almost quaint, the New York beyond our room seemed gray and cruel, a kind of pasty-faced Calcutta. We began to feel that there was some real connection between our world and Molly's world, as though, beneath Second Avenue, we had stumbled on a great abandoned tunnel (coffer-roofed, gaslit, something from a Doré engraving) that had long ago connected Canonbury Road and East Eighty-seventh Street.

MANDARIN ORANGES

I can't remember if I even liked them
when they were the special treat of our high-school lunchroom.
Probably not—they smacked of bribery:

for platitudes, volleyball, and lima beans
this splash of the Orient in a thin sugary plasma.
And yet today at the supermarket I

saw that silly geisha flirt her fan
against the flat, insipid turquoise sea
and wanted mandarin oranges more than

I've ever wanted anything, as if
they held the whole essence of youth and joy. O sweetness,
sunrise, hibiscus, Chinese lanterns, hearts—

we can't keep faith with the past;
in the end we love it because it is the past,
no matter how stubbornly we tell ourselves,

"Remember what this was like,
how bored you were, how miserable." Inscribed
in a margin of "Modern Chemistry" and dated
March 15, 1965.

—KATHA POLLITT

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CLOSED
LASZLO

In some sense, I suppose, everybody in the city has to do this: the only way to live in New York is to pretend it's someplace else. There are whole blocks filled with New Yorkers who believe they're living in Montmartre, apartment buildings that belong properly to Bloomsbury, and even a street or two that reside, imaginatively, in the New York of 1945. But it came to seem to us that our more peculiar vision—of Pre-Raphaelite New York—was different from these visions because it was *true,* corresponding to the facts of the new New York we saw around us. Edmund Wilson writes somewhere that, as an American of the twentieth century, he had come to feel that more and more he was living in the eighteenth century. We felt something similar—that, as New Yorkers of the early nineteen-eighties, we were actually living in the London of the eighteen-seventies. Wilson, of course, meant that the eighteenth century was inside his extraordinary head—that he shared and embodied, uniquely, a lost world of values. But our sense of living somewhere else was much more modest and matter-of-fact. We just thought that the New York we saw most closely and knew best—the New

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York of graduate students and aspiring artists and writers, the New York of tiny apartments and part-time jobs at libraries and publishing houses—was in its essential forms Victorian. Even the two material shaping circumstances of the nineteen-eighties in New York—the transformation of the city into what the more hardheaded economists call a "service-and-information economy," and the extension of the permanent housing shortage into a kind of reductio ad absurdum that left couples like ourselves in places more like large cells than small apartments—were in many ways regressive. The transformation from a manufacturing to a service-and-information economy is, after all, a transformation backward, from making things to making lists of things: the condition of the new age is the condition of clerkship. The new age in New York, as we saw it, looked less like a stockbroker in a Lamborghini and more like a scrivener wrapped in a woollen muffler. Even the nature of bohemianism—the ideal of the avant-garde—had altered in New York by the time we got here, just because the bohemians had a lot less room to be bohemian in. There is, after all, a bohemianism of the garret and a bohemianism of the loft. Loft bohemianism—the bohemianism of the Bateau-Lavoir and of New York in the sixties and seventies—is expansive and self-confident; the bohemianism of the garret (and by the time we arrived garrets of one kind or another were pretty much all that was left) has something wistful about it. Max Beerbohm captures this in his drawings of Rossetti and his circle: in their cluttered rooms, full of pets and knickknacks, there is something sweetly middle-class and poky, something touchingly deflated, about the Pre-Raphaelites, and this was a familiar quality in the work and life of our artist friends. Even our sexual manners, for all their apparent freedom, had something of the psychology of the long engagement about them: all our friends were as monogamous as swans, but remained bound together with very uncertain hopes of ever having enough money or room to have a normal family life. That we could be bound together carnally, too, didn't alter the essence of the thing; like Tommy Traddles, we could only wait and hope. Even the violence of New York life, which to our parents' generation had seemed not merely frightening but utterly disorienting, had come to seem to us at once so familiar and yet still so relatively uncommon that our acknowledgment of it had become resigned and fatalistic, like hearing of casualties in the Crimean War. Our parties involved makeshift arrangements of collapsible furniture—doors as tables, bathtubs as wine cellars—just like Bob Sawyer's supper party in "Pickwick," and we even had to struggle not to make too much noise for the landlady. We had the pallor of clerks, the wistful intricacy of naturalists, the complicated scruples of vicars.

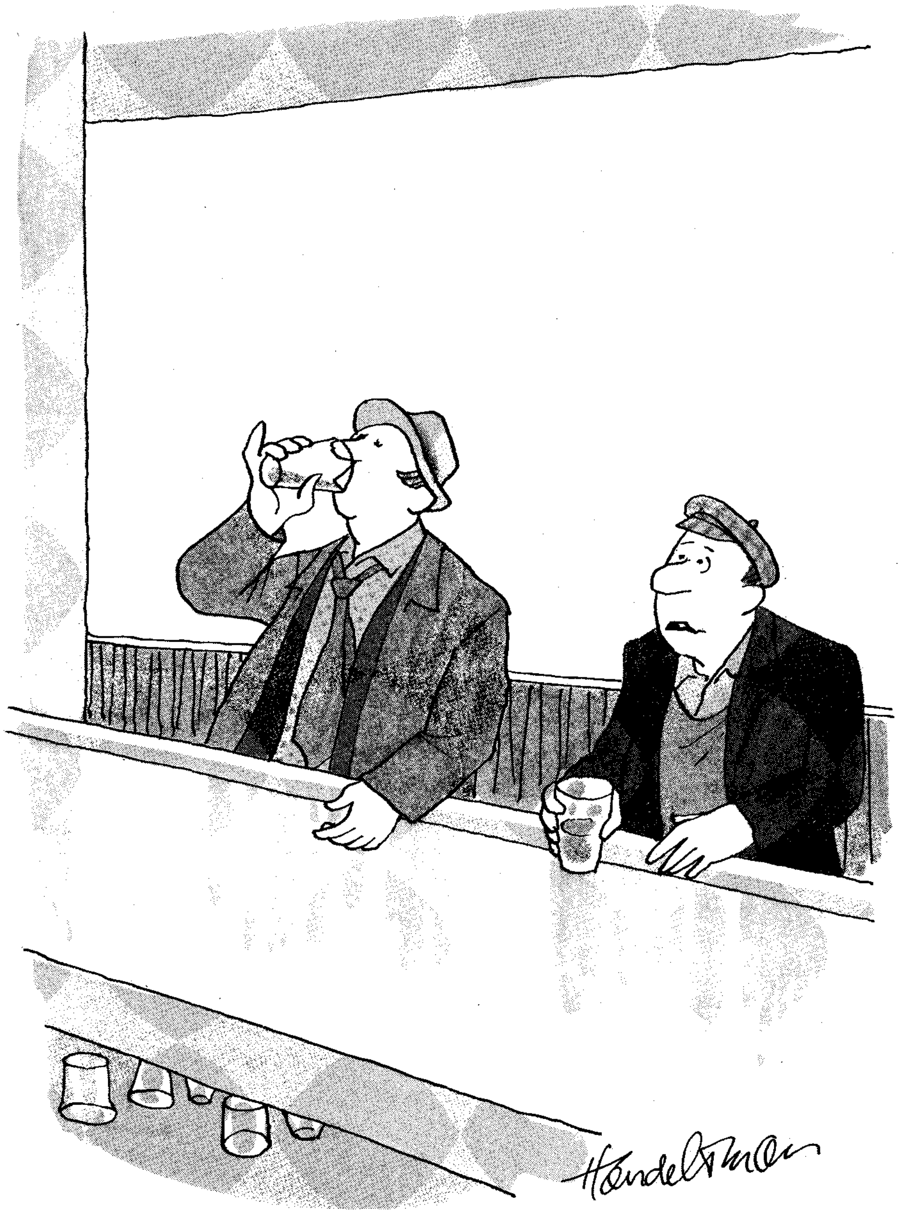
THIS vision, this imagined connection, soon became our sustaining metaphor, our staff, and it allowed us to make sense of our circumstances, but while we thought it essentially true, I don't know that we thought it *truly* true. Then, one evening in December, we turned to a new chapter in Molly's story (we made it an absolute rule that neither of us would read ahead), one with a surprising title: "America Calling." We found, to our astonishment, that in 1893 Molly had actually come to America. (She had been given money to attend one of the very first international conferences on education.) She also visited Montreal (where Martha and I grew up), and she came to New York, where she stayed at the Broadway Central Hotel, a few blocks from Astor Place. As she always did in a new place, Molly made a sketch of her surroundings. There it was: the curve of Broadway, the spire of the church at Tenth Street, the corniced buildings almost unchanged—the path that we took every night into the subway. It was as if John Donne had come home and surprised two stiff compasses making love, as if André Breton, hospitalized with a bad cold, had actually come across an umbrella and a sewing machine exchanging courtesies on an operating table—as though the most extravagant metaphysical juxtaposition of objects or ideas had become part of the solid fabric of the real world, and an utterly private, sustaining vision had become part of the humdrum currency of everyday life.

I might have thought less of this if I had not found out more about Henry Holiday. Martha was so enchanted by his drawings that I began to look at them hard, and soon came to contemplate an essay on the roots of Surrealist imagery in nineteenth-century popular illustration. Perhaps, I thought, there might be something in the notion that this artistic style first appeared in the margins—in children's literature—before it migrated into vanguard art, and perhaps Holiday's illustrations for the "Snark" might serve as an instance of this etymology. (This is the kind of notion that is pie to those of us who study at the Institute of Fine Arts.) And so I went to the Institute library to find out everything I could about Henry Holiday. I didn't have to look for long. He's there in Christopher Wood's big dictionary of Victorian painters. He had a great—or, anyway, a big—career: mythological subjects, historical subjects, murals, friezes. His engravings for the "Snark" had been his best-known venture into popular illustration. The last thing I found out brought me up with a shudder. His single greatest work, Henry Holiday claimed, was his designs for the stained-glass windows of the Rhinelander Church of the Holy Trinity, at 316 East Eighty-eighth Street in Manhattan.

As I said to Martha, no doubt it is the curse and the blessing of the over-educated and underhoused to always live a bit in this world and a bit in an imagined one; complicated sustaining metaphors are what the world gives those with too much learning and too little room. But what are we to do, to think, when the imagined world turns out to be the world across the street, around the corner—when it turns out that the lights that light our mornings once led the way to the Snark?

A little while later, Martha and I stumbled into a "better" situation—a fairly big loft downtown—and left our windows and our spire. Life now seems roomier but also somehow emptier and more frightening; there are no sustaining metaphors in lofts. For some reason, I think a lot now about an odd catechism that appeared in one of Molly's textbooks, and that Molly, writing as an old lady in a London suburb, still remembered from her childhood. It comes from a Dr. Brewer's "Guide to Science," and it goes like this: "*Q*. What should a fearful person do to be secure in a storm? *A*. Draw his bedstead into the middle of his room, commit himself to the care of God, and go to bed."

—Adam Gopnik



"I always thought I was a pretty good father, though I'm the first to admit I'm no Bill Cosby."

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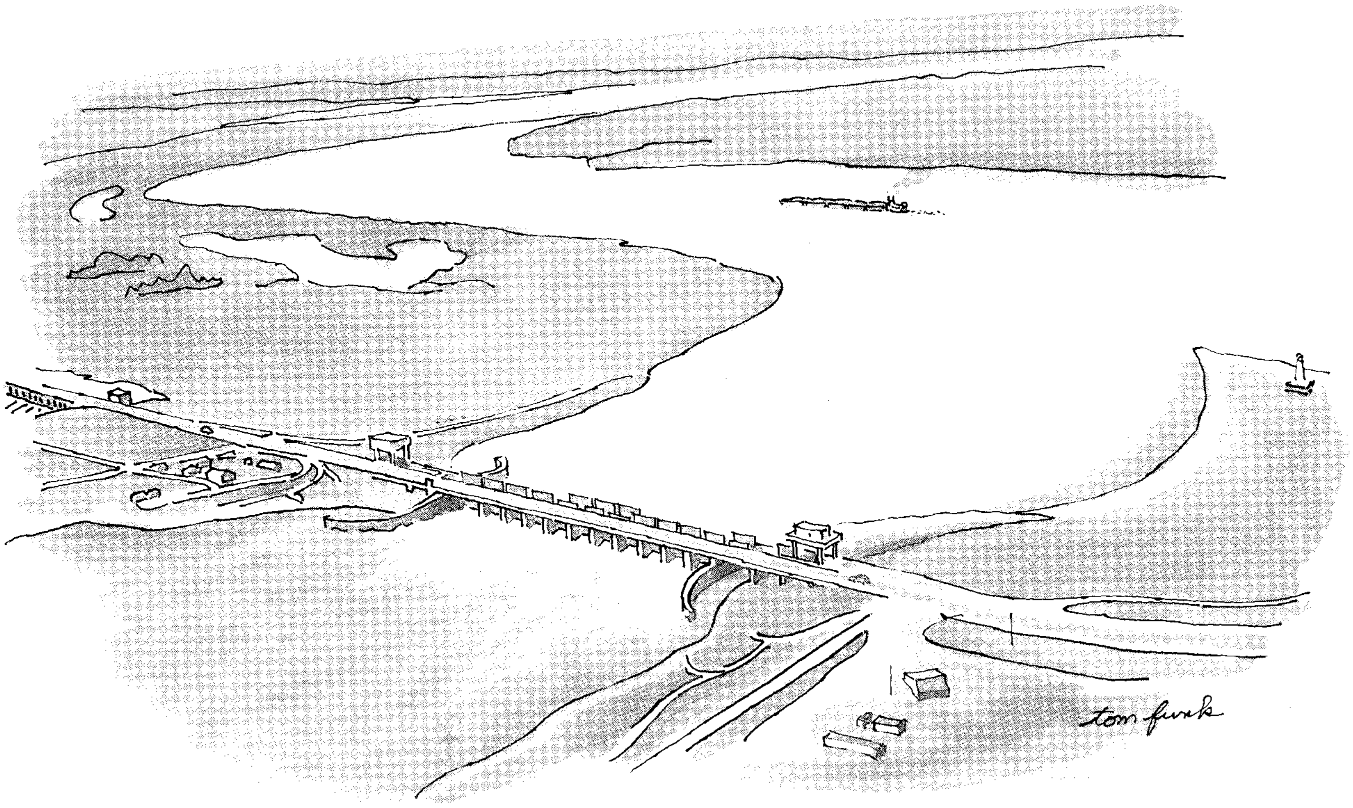
Phyllis Glassman now uses the affair as an example of First Amendment issues in her beginning journalism class. The lesson: "Josh or anyone else writing for the paper has the right to express their opinion on the editorial page."—*Miami Herald.*

So much for beginning journalism.

THE CONTROL OF NATURE

ATCHAFALAYA



The Low Sill at Old River

THREE hundred miles up the Mississippi River from its mouth—many parishes above New Orleans and well north of Baton Rouge—a navigation lock in the Mississippi's right bank allows ships to drop out of the river. In evident defiance of nature, they descend as much as thirty-three feet, then go off to the west or south. This, to say the least, bespeaks a rare relationship between a river and adjacent terrain—any river, anywhere, let alone the third-ranking river on earth. The adjacent terrain is Cajun country, in a geographical sense the apex of the French Acadian world, which forms a triangle in southern Louisiana, with its base the Gulf Coast from the mouth of the Mississippi almost to Texas, its two sides converging up here near the lock—and including neither New Orleans nor Baton Rouge. The people of the local parishes (Pointe Coupee Parish, Avoyelles Parish) would call this the apex of Cajun country in every possible sense—no one more emphatically than the lockmaster, on whose face one day I noticed a spreading astonishment as he watched me remove from my pocket a red bandanna.

"You are a coonass with that red handkerchief," he said.

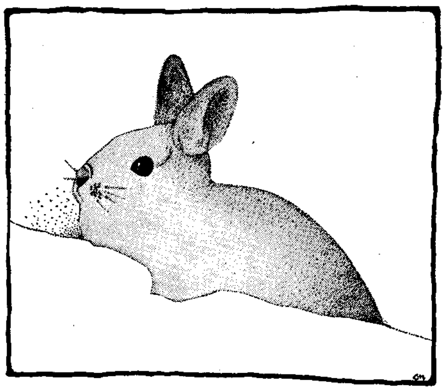
A coonass being a Cajun, I threw him an appreciative smile. I told him that I always have a bandanna in my pocket, wherever I happen to be—in New York as in Maine or Louisiana, not to mention New Jersey (my home)—and sometimes the color is blue. He said, "Blue is the sign of a Yankee. But that red handkerchief—with that, you are pure coonass." The lockmaster wore a white hard hat above his creased and deeply tanned face, his full but not overloaded frame. The nameplate on his desk said RABALAIS.

The navigation lock is not a formal place. When I first met Rabalais, six months before, he was sitting with his staff at 10 A.M. eating homemade bread, macaroni and cheese, and a mound of rice that was concealed beneath what he called "smoked old-chicken gravy." He said, "Get yourself a plate of that." As I went somewhat heavily for the old chicken, Rabalais said to the others, "He's pure coonass. I knew it."

If I was pure coonass, I would like to know what that made Rabalais—Norris F. Rabalais, born and raised on a farm near Simmesport, in Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana. When Rabalais was a child, there was no navigation lock to lower ships from the Mississippi. The water just poured out—boats with it—and flowed on into a distributary waterscape known as Atchafalaya. In each decade since about 1860, the Atchafalaya River had drawn off more water from the Mississippi than it had in the decade before. By the late nineteen-forties, when Rabalais was in his teens, the volume approached one-third. As the Atchafalaya widened and deepened, eroding headward, offering the Mississippi an increasingly attractive alternative, it was preparing for nothing less than an absolute capture: before long, it would take all of the Mississippi, and itself become the master stream. Rabalais said, "They used to teach us in high school that one day there was going to be structures up here to control the flow of that water, but I never dreamed I was going to be on one. Somebody way back yonder—which is dead and gone now—visualized it. We had some pretty sharp teachers."

The Mississippi River, with its sand and silt, has created most of Louisiana, and it could not have done so by remaining in one channel. If it had, southern Louisiana would be a long narrow peninsula reaching into the Gulf of Mexico. Southern Louisiana exists in its present form because the Mississippi River has jumped here and there within an arc about two hundred miles wide, like a pianist playing with one hand—frequently and radically changing course, surging over the left or the right bank to go off in utterly new directions. Always it is the river's purpose to get to the Gulf by the shortest and steepest gradient. As the mouth advances southward and the river lengthens, the gradient declines, the current slows, and sediment builds up the bed. Eventually, it builds up so much that the river spills to one side. Major shifts of that nature have tended to occur roughly once a millennium. The Mississippi's main channel of three thousand years ago is now the quiet water of Bayou Teche, which mimics the shape of the Mississippi. Along Bayou Teche, on the high ground of ancient natural levees, are Jeanerette, Breaux Bridge, Broussard, Olivier—arcuate strings of Cajun towns. Eight hundred years before the birth of Christ, the channel was captured from the east. It shifted abruptly and flowed in that direction for about a thousand years. In the second century A.D., it was captured again, and taken south, by the now unprepossessing Bayou Lafourche, which, by the year 1000, was losing its hegemony to the river's present course, through the region that would be known as Plaquemines. By the nineteen-fifties, the Mississippi River had advanced so far past New Orleans and out into the Gulf that it was about to shift again, and its offspring Atchafalaya was ready to receive it. By the route of the Atchafalaya, the distance across the delta plain was a hundred and forty-five miles—well under half the length of the route of the master stream.

For the Mississippi to make such a change was completely natural, but in the interval since the last shift Europeans had settled beside the river, a nation had developed, and the nation could not afford nature. The consequences of the Atchafalaya's conquest of the Mississippi would include but not be limited to the demise of Baton Rouge and the virtual destruction of New Orleans. With its fresh water gone, its harbor a silt bar, its economy disconnected from inland commerce, New Orleans would turn into New Gomorrah. Moreover, there were so many big industries between the two cities that at night they made the river glow like a worm. As a result of settlement patterns, this reach of the Mississippi had long been known as "the German coast," and now, with B. F. Goodrich, E. I. du Pont, Union Carbide, Reynolds Metals, Shell, Mobil, Texaco, Exxon, Monsanto, Uniroyal, Georgia-Pacific, Hydrocarbon Industries, Vulcan Materials, Nalco Chemical, Freeport Chemical, Dow Chemical, Allied Chemical, Stauffer Chemical, Hooker Chemicals, Rubicon Chemicals, American Petrofina—with an infrastructural concentration equalled in few other places—it was often called "the American Ruhr." The industries were there because of the river. They had come for its navigational convenience and its fresh water. They would not, and could not, linger beside a tidal creek. For nature to take its course was simply unthinkable. The Sixth World War would do less damage to southern Louisiana. Nature, in this place, had become an enemy of the state.



Rabalais works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Some years ago, the Corps made a film that showed the navigation lock and a complex of associated structures built in an effort to prevent the capture of the Mississippi. The narrator said, "This nation has a large and powerful adversary. Our opponent could cause the United States to lose nearly all her seaborne commerce, to lose her standing as first among trading nations. . . . We are fighting Mother Nature. . . . It's a battle we have to fight day by day, year by year; the health of our economy depends on victory."

Rabalais was in on the action from the beginning, working as a construction inspector. Here by the site of the navigation lock was where the battle had begun. An old meander bend of the Mississippi was the conduit through which water had been escaping into the Atchafalaya. Complicating the scene, the old meander bend had also served as the mouth of the Red River. Coming in from the northwest, from Texas via Shreveport, the Red River had been a tributary of the Mississippi for a couple of thousand years—until the nineteen-forties, when the Atchafalaya captured it and drew it away. The capture of the Red increased the Atchafalaya's power as it cut down the country beside the Mississippi. On a map, these entangling watercourses had come to look like the letter "H." The Mississippi was the right-hand side. The Atchafalaya and the captured Red were the left-hand side. The crosspiece, scarcely seven miles long, was the former meander

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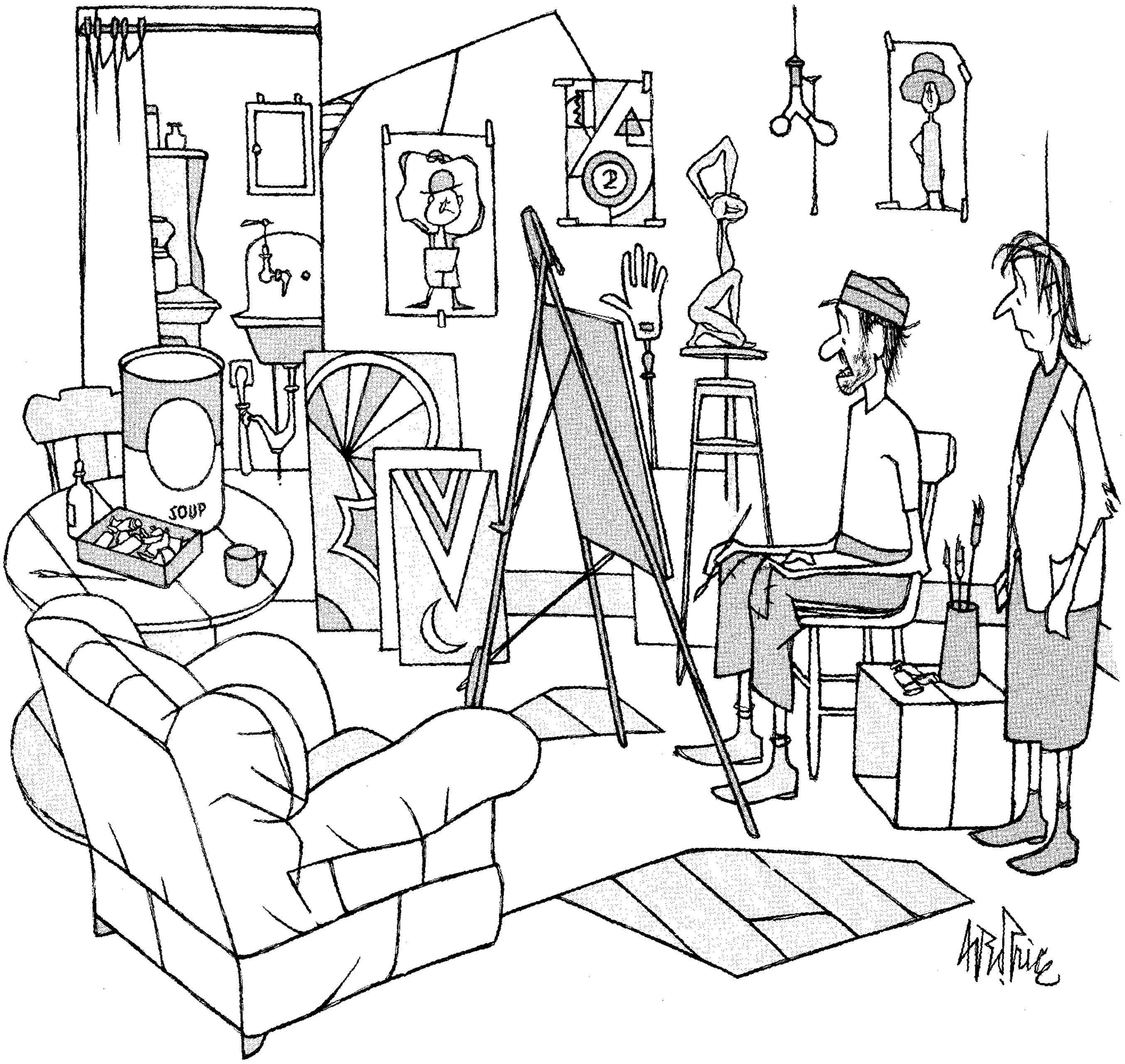
MARY MAGDALENE AND I

The seven unclean spirits of Mary Magdalene,
Chased from her by the Teacher with his prayer,
Hover in the air in a batlike flight,
While she, with one leg folded in,
Another bent at the knee, sits staring hard
At her toe and the thong of her sandal
As if she had just noticed such an odd thing.
Her chestnut-brown hair curls in rings
And covers her back, strong, almost virile,
Rests on her shoulder, on a dark-blue dress
Under which her nakedness phosphoresces.
The face is heavyish, the neck harboring
A voice that is low, husky, as if hoarse.
But she will say nothing. Forever between
The element of flesh and the element
Of hope, she stays still. At the canvas's corner
The name of a painter who desired her.

—Czeslaw Milosz



"Maybe I just haven't suffered enough. Why don't you whip up some of your curried pork balls and refried rice for dinner?"

• •

bend, which the people of the parish had long since named Old River. Sometimes enough water would pour out of the Mississippi and through Old River to quintuple the falls at Niagara. It was at Old River that the United States was going to lose its status among the world's trading nations. It was at Old River that New Orleans would be lost, Baton Rouge would be lost. At Old River, we would lose the American Ruhr. The Army's name for its operation there was Old River Control.

Rabalais gestured across the lock toward what seemed to be a pair of placid lakes separated by a trapezoidal earth dam a hundred feet high. It weighed five million tons, and it had stopped Old River. It had cut Old River in two. The severed ends were sitting there filling up with weeds. Where the Atchafalaya had entrapped the Mississippi, bigmouth bass were now in charge. The navigation lock had been dug beside this monument. The big dam, like the lock, was fitted into the mainline levee of the Mississippi. In Rabalais's pickup, we drove on the top of the dam, and drifted as well through Old River country. On this day, he said, the water on the Mississippi side was eighteen feet above sea level, while the water on the Atchafalaya side was five feet above sea level. Cattle were grazing on the slopes of the levees, and white horses with white colts, in deep-green grass. Behind the levees, the fields were flat and reached to rows of distant trees. Very early in the morning, a low fog had covered the fields. The sun, just above the horizon, was large and ruddy in the mist, rising slowly, like a hot-air balloon. This was a countryside of corn and soybeans, of grain-fed-catfish ponds, of feed stores and Kingdom Halls in crossroad towns. There were small neat cemeteries with ranks of white sarcophagi raised a foot or two aboveground, notwithstanding the protection of the levees. There were tarpapered cabins on concrete pylons, and low brick houses under planted pines. Pickups under the pines. If this was a form of battlefield, it was not unlike a great many battlefields—landscapes so quiet they belie their story. Most battlefields, though, are places where something happened once. Here it would happen indefinitely.

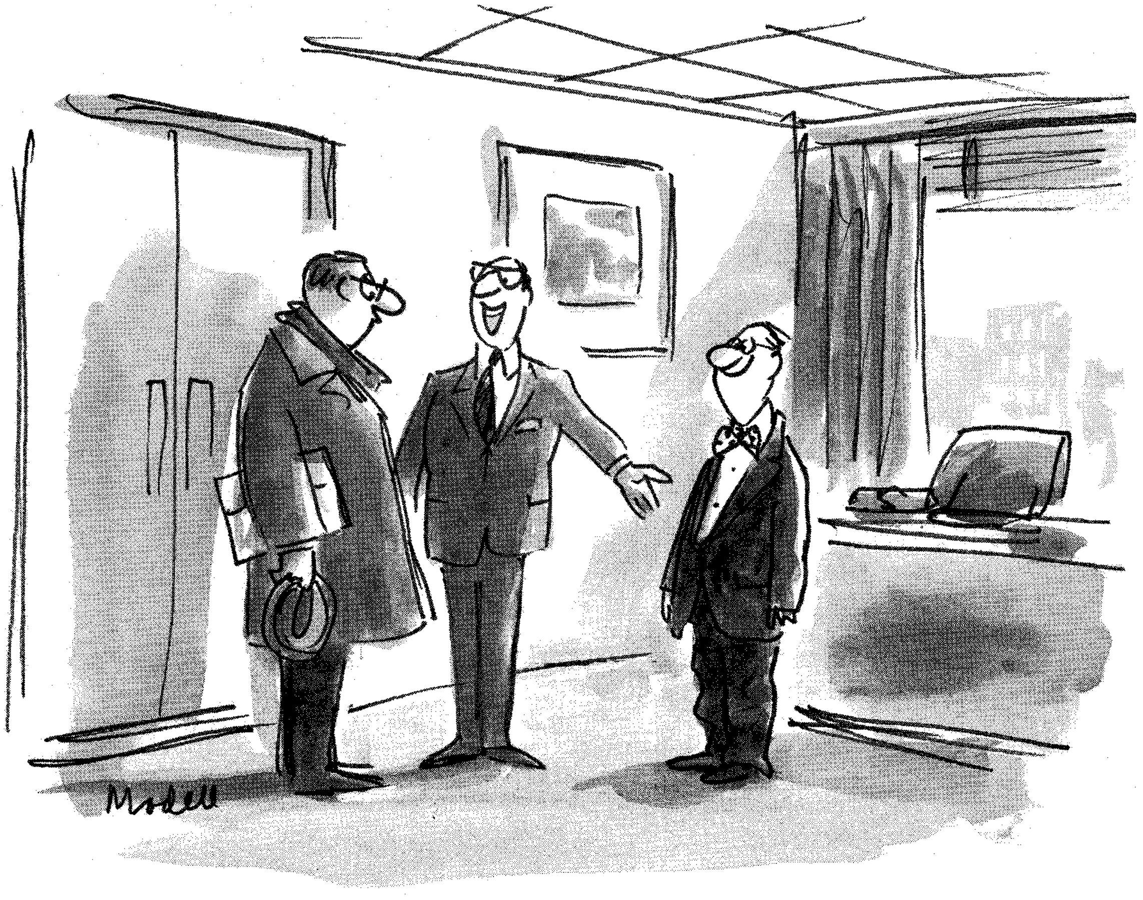
We went out to the Mississippi. Still indistinct in mist, it looked like a piece of the sea. Rabalais said, "That's a wide booger, right there." In the spring high water of vintage years—1927, 1937, 1973—more than two million cubic feet of water had gone by this place in every second. Sixty-five kilotons per second. By the mouth of the inflow channel leading to the lock were rock jetties, articulated concrete mattress revetments, and other heavy defenses. Rabalais observed that this particular site was no more vulnerable than almost any other point in this reach of river that ran so close to the Atchafalaya plain. There were countless places where a breakout might occur: "It has a tendency to go through just anywheres you can call for."

Why, then, had the Mississippi not jumped the bank and long since diverted to the Atchafalaya?

"Because they're watching it close," said Rabalais. "It's under close surveillance."

AFTER the Corps dammed Old River, in 1963, the engineers could not just walk away, like roofers who had fixed a leak. In the early planning stages, they had considered doing that, but there were certain effects they could not overlook. The Atchafalaya, after all, was a distributary of the Mississippi—the major one, and, as it happened, the only one worth mentioning that the Corps had not already plugged. In time of thundering flood, the Atchafalaya was useful as a safety valve, to relieve a good deal of pressure and help keep New Orleans from ending up in Yucatán. The Atchafalaya was also the source of the water in the swamps and bayous of the Cajun world. It was the water supply of small cities and countless towns. Its upper reaches were surrounded by farms. The Corps was not in a political or moral position to kill the Atchafalaya. It had to feed it water. By the principles of nature, the more the Atchafalaya was given, the more it would want to take, because it was the steeper stream. The more it was given, the deeper it would make its bed. The difference in level between the Atchafalaya and the Mississippi would continue to increase, magnifying the conditions for capture. The Corps would have to deal with that. The Corps would have to build something that could give the Atchafalaya a portion of the Mississippi and at the same time prevent it from taking all. In effect, the Corps would have to build a Fort Laramie: a place where the natives could buy flour and firearms but where the gates could be closed if they attacked.

Ten miles upriver from the navigation lock, where the collective sediments were thought to be more firm, they dug into a piece of dry ground and built what appeared for a time to be an incongruous, waterless bridge. Five hundred and sixty-six feet long, it stood parallel to the Mississippi and about a thousand yards back from the water. Between its abutments were ten piers, framing eleven gates that could be lifted or dropped, opened or shut, like windows. To this structure, and through it, there soon came a new Old River—an excavated channel leading in from the Mississippi and out seven miles to the Red-Atchafalaya. The Corps was not intending to accommodate nature. Its engineers were intending to control it in space and arrest it in time. In 1950, shortly before the project began, the Atchafalaya was taking thirty per cent of the water that came down from the north to Old River. This water was known as the latitude flow, and it consisted of a little in the Red, a lot in the Mississippi. The United States Congress, in its deliberations, decided that "the distribution of flow and sediment in the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers is now in desirable proportions and should be so maintained." The



"Harris here is one of our limited partners."

Corps was thereby ordered to preserve 1950. In perpetuity, at Old River, thirty per cent of the latitude flow was to pass to the Atchafalaya.

The device that resembled a ten-pier bridge was technically a sill, or weir, and it was put on line in 1963, in an orchestrated sequence of events that flourished the art of civil engineering. The old Old River was closed. The new Old River was opened. The water, as it crossed the sill from the Mississippi's level to the Atchafalaya's, tore to white shreds in the deafening turbulence of a great new falls, from lip to basin the construction of the Corps. More or less simultaneously, the navigation lock opened its chamber. Now everything had changed and nothing had changed. Boats could still drop away from the river. The ratio of waters continued as before—this for the American Ruhr, that for the ecosystems of the Cajun swamps. Withal, there was a change of command, as the Army replaced nature.

world week
STEVENSON

"Our panel today includes Hurley Throod, the opinionated Washington bureau chief; Dennis Wurtner, the lightweight TV commentator; Marsha Boyle, the contentious syndicated columnist; and Sidney H. Hall, the self-styled political expert."

In time, people would come to suggest that there was about these enterprises an element of hauteur. A professor of law at Tulane University, for example, would assign it third place in the annals of arrogance. His name was Oliver Houck. "The greatest arrogance was the stealing of the sun," he said. "The second-greatest arrogance is running rivers backward. The third-greatest arrogance is trying to hold the Mississippi in place. The ancient channels of the river go almost to Texas. Human beings have tried to restrict the river to one course—that's where the arrogance began." The Corps listens closely to things like that and files them in its archives. Houck had a point. Bold it was indeed to dig a fresh conduit in the very ground where one river had prepared to trap another, bolder yet to build a structure there meant to be in charge of what might happen.

Some people went further than Houck, and said that they thought the structure would fail. In 1980, for example, a study published by the Water Resources Research Institute, at Louisiana State University, described Old River as "the scene of a direct confrontation between the United States Government and the Mississippi River," and—all constructions of the Corps notwithstanding—awarded the victory to the Mississippi River. "Just when this will occur cannot be predicted," the report concluded. "It could happen next year, during the next decade, or sometime in the next thirty or forty years. But the final outcome is simply a matter of time and it is only prudent to prepare for it."

The Corps thought differently, saying, "We can't let that happen. We are charged by Congress not to let that happen." Its promotional film referred to Old River Control as "a good soldier." Old River Control was, moreover, "the keystone of the comprehensive flood-protection project for the lower Mississippi Valley," and nothing was going to remove the keystone. People arriving at New Orleans District Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, were confronted at the door by a muralled collage of maps and pictures and bold letters unequivocally declaring, "The Old River Control Structures, located about two hundred miles above New Orleans on the Mississippi River, prevent the Mississippi from changing course by controlling flows diverted into the Atchafalaya Basin."

No one's opinions were based on more intimate knowledge than those of LeRoy Dugas, Rabalais's upstream counterpart—the manager of the apparatus that controlled the flow at Old River. Like Rabalais, he was Acadian and of the country. Dugie—as he is universally called—had worked at Old River Control since 1963, when the water started flowing. In years to follow, colonels and generals would seek his counsel. "Those professors at L.S.U. say that whatever we do we're going to lose the system," he remarked one day at Old River, and, after a pause, added, "Maybe they're right." His voice had the sound of water over rock. In pitch, it was lower than a helicon tuba. Better to hear him indoors, in his operations office, away from the structure's competing thunders. "Maybe they're right," he repeated. "We feel that we can hold the river. We're going to try. Whenever you try to control nature, you've got one strike against you."

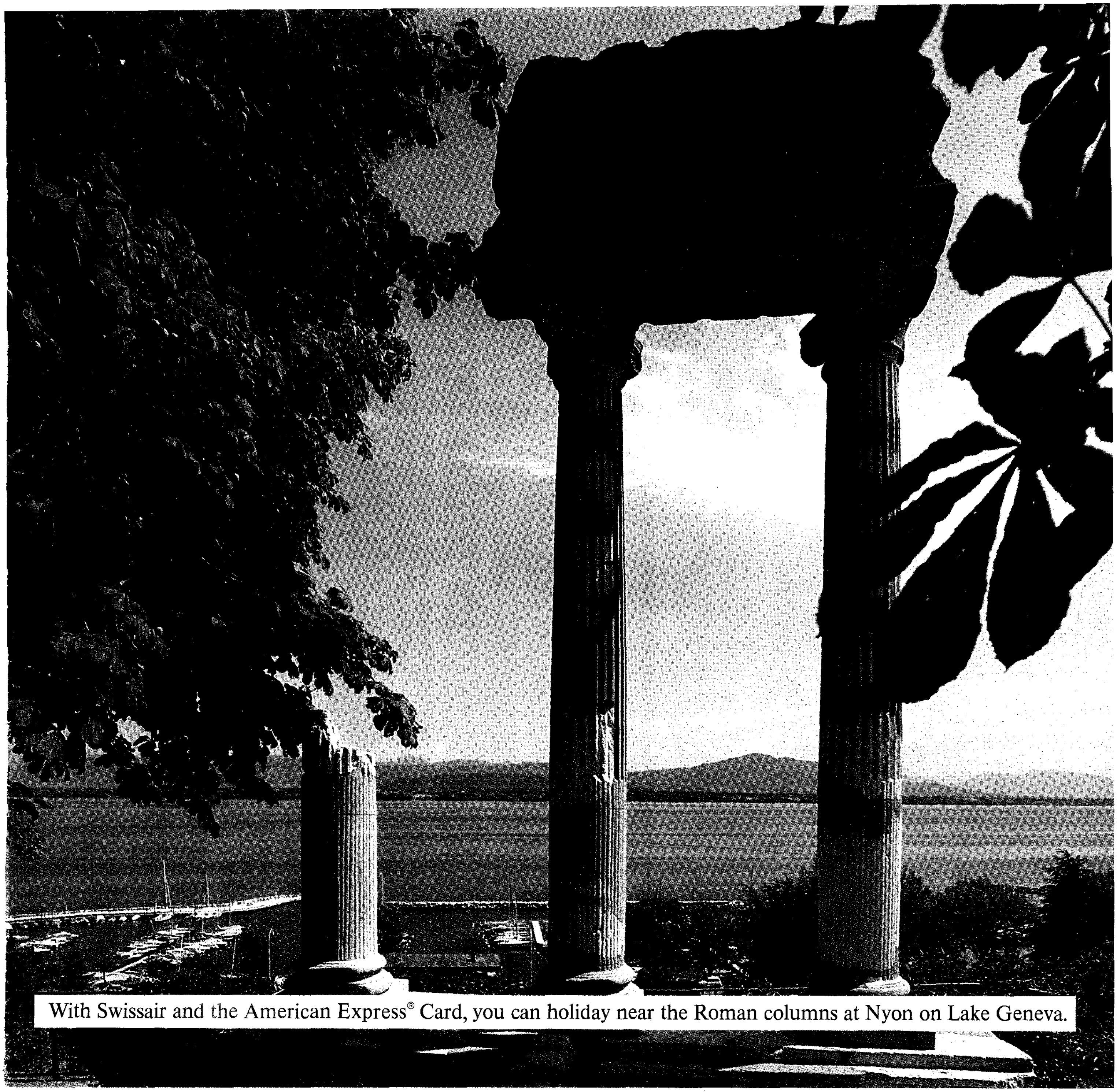
Dugie's face, weathered and deeply tanned, was saved from looking weary by the alertness and the humor in his eyes. He wore a large, lettered belt buckle that said TO HELP CONTROL THE MISSISSIPPI. "I was originally born in Morganza," he told me. "Thirty miles down the road. I have lived in Pointe Coupee Parish all my life. Once, I even closed my domicile and went to work in Texas for the Corps—but you always come back." (Rabalais also—as he puts it—"left out of here one time," but not for long.) All through Dugie's youth, of course, the Mississippi had spilled out freely to feed the Atchafalaya. He took the vagaries of the waters for granted, not to mention the supremacy of their force in flood. He was a naval gunner on Liberty ships in the South Pacific during the Second World War, and within a year or two of his return was astonished to hear that the Corps of Engineers was planning to restrain Old River. "They were going to try to control the flow," he said. "I thought they had lost their marbles."

Outside, on the roadway that crosses the five-hundred-and-sixty-six-foot structure, one could readily understand where the marbles might have gone. Even at this time of modest normal flow, we looked down into a rage of water. It was running at about twelve miles an hour—significantly faster than the Yukon after breakup—and it was pounding into the so-called stilling basin on the downstream side, the least still place you would ever see. The No. 10 rapids of the Grand Canyon, which cannot be run without risk of life, resemble the Old River stilling basin, but the rapids of the canyon are a fifth as wide. The Susitna River is sometimes more like it—melted glacier ice from the Alaska Range. Huge trucks full of hardwood logs kept coming from the north to cross the structure, on their way to a chipping mill at Simmesport. One could scarcely hear them as they went by.

There was a high sill next to this one—a separate weir, two-

ZZ
GRRR
BOOTH

Even the ancient Romans enjoyed holidays in Switzerland, despite the lack of a Basel Art Museum, "William Tell" performances, or a Lucerne Music Festival.



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thirds of a mile long and set two feet above the local flood stage, its purpose being to help regulate the flow of extremely high waters. The low sill, as the one we stood on was frequently called, was the prime valve at Old River, and dealt with the water every day. The fate of the project had depended on the low sill, and it was what people meant when, as they often did, they simply said "the structure." The structure and the high sill—like the navigation lock downstream—were fitted into the Mississippi's mainline levee. Beyond the sound of the water, the broad low country around these structures was quiet and truly still. Here and again in the fields, pump jacks bobbed for oil. In the river batcher—the silt-swept no man's land between waterline and levee—lone egrets sat in trees, waiting for the next cow.

Dugie remarked that he would soon retire, that he felt old and worn down from fighting the river.

I said to him, "All you need is a good flood."

And he said, "Oh, no. Don't talk like that, man. You talk vulgar."

It was odd to look out toward the main-stem Mississippi, scarcely half a mile away, and see its contents spilling sideways, like cornmeal pouring from a hole in a burlap bag. Dugie said that so much water coming out of the Mississippi created a powerful and deceptive draw, something like a vacuum, that could suck in boats of any size. He had seen some big ones up against the structure. In the mid-sixties, a man alone had come down from Wisconsin in a small double-ended vessel with curling ends and tumblehome—a craft that would not have been unfamiliar to the Algonquians, who named the Mississippi. Dugie called this boat "a pirogue." Whatever it was, the man had paddled it all the way from Wisconsin, intent on reaching New Orleans. When he had nearly conquered the Mississippi, however, he was captured by the Atchafalaya. Old River caught him, pulled him off the Mississippi, and shot him through the structure. "He was in shock, but he lived," Dugie said. "We put him in the hospital in Natchez."

After a moment, I said, "This is an exciting place."

And Dugie said, "You've heard of Murphy—'What can happen will happen'? This is where Murphy lives."

A TOWBOAT coming up the Atchafalaya may be running from Corpus Christi to Vicksburg with a cargo of gasoline, or from Houston to St. Paul with ethylene glycol. Occasionally, Rabalais sees a sailboat, more rarely a canoe. One time, a cottonwood-log dugout with a high Viking bow went past Old River. A ship carrying Leif Eriksson himself, however, would be less likely to arrest the undivided attention of the lockmaster than a certain red-trimmed cream-hulled vessel called Mississippi, bearing Major General Thomas Sands.

Each year, in late summer or early fall, the Mississippi comes down its eponymous river and noses into the lock. This is the Low-Water Inspection Trip, when the General makes a journey from St. Louis and into the Atchafalaya, stopping along the way at river towns, picking up visitors, listening to complaints. In external configuration, the Mississippi is a regular towboat—two hundred and seventeen feet long, fifty feet wide, its horsepower approaching four thousand. The term "towboat" is a misnomer, for the river towboats all push their assembled barges and are therefore designed with broad flat bows. Their unpleasant profiles seem precarious, as if they were the rear halves of ships that have been cut in two. The Mississippi triumphs over these disadvantages. Intended as a carrier of influenceable people, it makes up in luxury what it suffers in form. Only its red trim is martial. Its over-all bright cream suggests globules that have risen to the top. Its broad flat front is a wall of picture windows, of riverine panoramas, faced with cream-colored couches among coffee tables and standing lamps. A river towboat will push as many as fifty barges at one time. What this boat pushes is the program of the Corps.

The Mississippi, on its fall trip, is the site of on-board hearings at Cape Girardeau, Memphis, Vicksburg, and, ultimately, Morgan City. Customarily, it arrives at Old River early in the morning. Before the boat goes through the lock, people with names like Broussard, Brignac, Begnaud, Blanchard, Juneau, Gautreau, Caillouet, and Smith get on—people from the Atchafalaya Basin Levee Board, the East Jefferson Levee Board, the Pontchartrain Levee Board, the Louisiana Office of Public Works, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District. Oliver Houck, the Tulane professor, gets on, and nine people—seven civilians and two colonels

—from the New Orleans District of the Corps of Engineers. "This is the ultimate in communications," says the enthusiastic General Sands as he greets his colleagues and guests. The gates close behind the Mississippi. The mooring bits inside the lock wail like coyotes as the water and the boat go down.

The pilothouse of the Mississippi is a wide handsome room directly above the lounge and similarly fronted with a wall of windows. It has map-and-chart tables, consoles of electronic equipment, redundant radars. The pilots stand front and center, as trim and trig as pilots of the air—John Dugger, from Collierville, Tennessee (the ship's home port is Memphis), and Jorge Cano, a local "contact pilot," who is here to help the regular pilots sense the shoals of the Atchafalaya. Among the mutating profiles of the river, their work is complicated. Mark Twain wrote of river pilots, "Two things seemed pretty apparent to me. One was, that in order to be a pilot a man had got to learn more than any one man ought to be allowed to know; and the other was, that he must learn it all over again in a different way every twenty-four hours. . . . Your true pilot cares nothing about anything on earth but the river, and his pride in his occupation surpasses the pride of kings." Cano, for his part, is somewhat less flattering on the subject of Twain. He says it baffles him that Twain has "such a big reputation for someone who spent so little time on the river." Today, the Atchafalaya waters are twelve feet lower than the Mississippi's. Cano says that the difference is often as much as twenty. Now the gates slowly open, revealing the outflow channel that leads into old Old River and soon to the Atchafalaya.

The Mississippi River Commission, which is part civilian and part military, with General Sands as president, is required by statute to make these trips—to inspect the flood-control and navigation systems from Illinois to the Gulf, and to hold the hearings. Accordingly, there are two major generals and one brigadier aboard, several colonels, various majors—in all, a military concentration that is actually untypical of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps consists essentially of civilians, with a veneer of military people at and near the top. For example, Sands has with him his chief executive assistant, his chief engineer, his chief planner, his chief of

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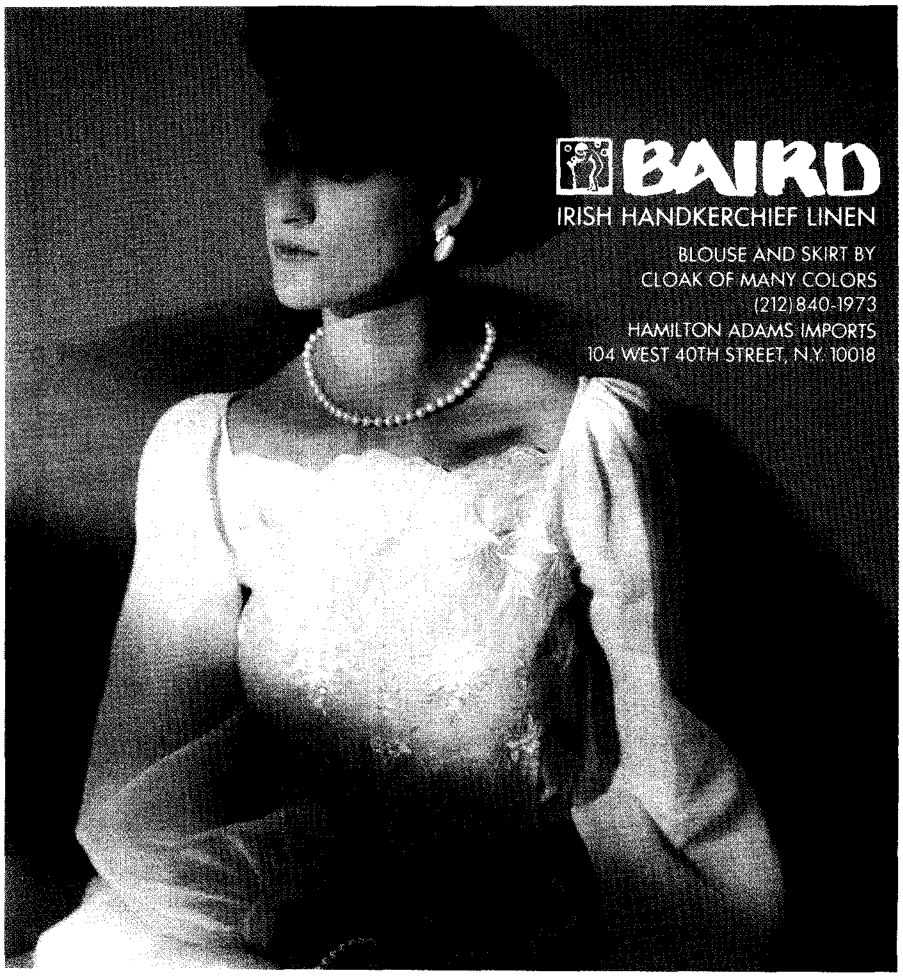

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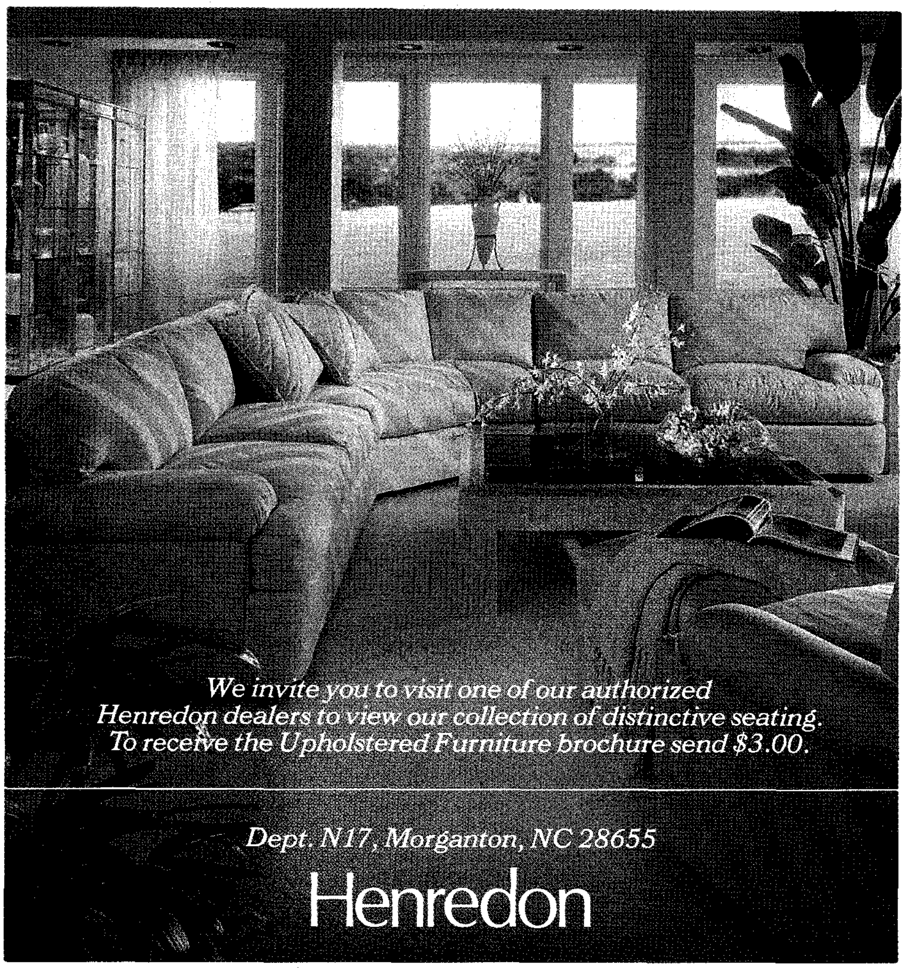

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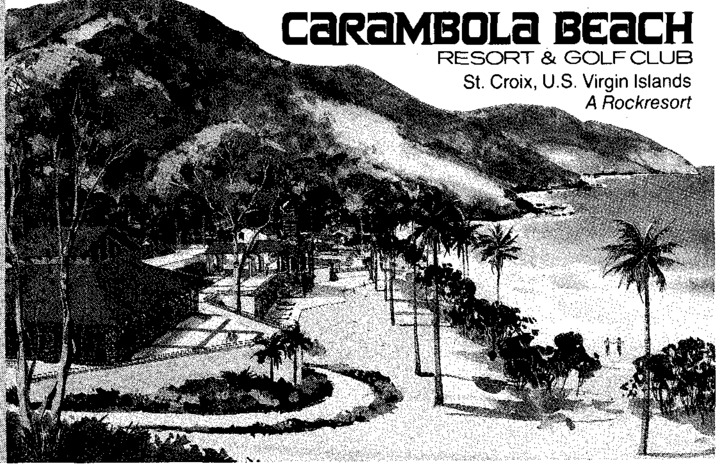

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operations, and his chief of programming. All these chiefs are civilians. Sands is commander of the Corps' Lower Mississippi Valley Division, of which the New Orleans District, which includes Old River, is a part. The New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, consists of something like ten Army officers and fourteen hundred civilians.

Just why the Army should be involved at all with levee systems, navigation locks, rock jetties, concrete revetments, and the austere realities of deltaic geomorphology is a question that attracts no obvious answer. The Corps is here because it is here. Its presence is an expression not of contemporary military strategy but of pure evolutionary tradition, its depth of origin about a century and three-quarters. The Corps is here specifically to safeguard the nation against any repetition of the War of 1812. When that unusual year was in its thirty-sixth month, the British Army landed on the Gulf Coast and marched against New Orleans. The war had been promoted, not to say provoked, by territorially aggressive American Midwesterners who were known around the country as hawks. It had so far produced some invigorating American moments ("We have met the enemy and they are ours"), including significant naval victories by ships like the Hornet and the Wasp. By and large, though, the triumphs had been British. The British had repelled numerous assaults on Canada. They had established a base in Maine. In Washington, they had burned the Capitol and the White House, and with their rutilant rockets and air-burst ballistics they tried to destroy Baltimore. New Orleans was not unaware of these events, and very much dreaded invasion. When it came, militarily untrained American backwoods sharpshooters, standing behind things like cotton bales, picked off two thousand soldiers of the King while losing seventy-one of their own. Nonetheless, the city's fear of invasion long outlasted the war.

Despite the Treaty of Ghent, there was a widespread assumption that the British would attack again and, if so, would surely attack where they had attacked before. One did not have to go to the War College to learn that lightning enjoys a second chance. Fortifications were therefore required in the environs of New Orleans. That this was an assignment for the Army

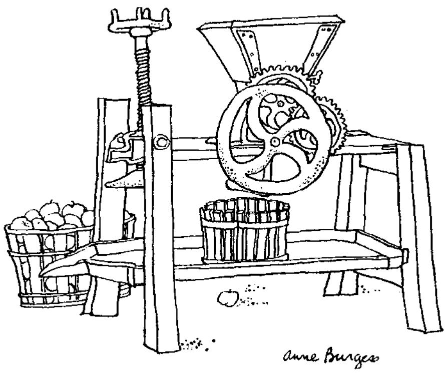
Corps of Engineers was obvious in more than a military sense. There was—and for another decade would be—only one school of engineering in America. This was the United States Military Academy, at West Point, New York. The academy had been founded in 1802. The beginnings of the Army Corps of Engineers actually date to the American Revolution. General Washington, finding among his aroused colonists few engineers worthy of the word, hired engineers from Louis XVI, and the first Corps was for the most part French.

The Army engineers chose half a dozen sites near New Orleans and, setting a pattern, signed up a civilian contractor to build the fortifications. Congress also instructed the Army to survey the Mississippi and its tributaries with an eye to assuring and improving inland navigation. Thus the Corps spread northward from its military fortifications into civil works along the rivers. In the eighteen-forties and fifties, many of these projects were advanced under the supervision of Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, West Point '38, a native of St. Bernard Parish, and ranking military engineer in the district. Late in 1860, Beauregard was named superintendent of the United States Military Academy. He served five days, resigned to become a Confederate general, and opened the Civil War by directing the bombardment of Fort Sumter.

So much for why there are military officers on the towboat Mississippi inspecting the flood controls of Louisiana's delta plain. Thomas Sands—with his two stars, his warm smile, his intuitive sense of people, and his knowledge of hydrology—is Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard's apostolic successor. Sands is trim, athletic, and, in appearance, youthful. Only in his Vietnam ribbons does he show the effects of his assignments as a combat engineer. One of his thumbs is larger and less straight than the other, but that is nothing more than an orthopedic reference to the rigors of plebe lacrosse—West Point '58. He grew up near Nashville, and has an advanced degree in hydrology from Texas A. & M. and a law degree he earned at night while working in the Pentagon. As a colonel, he spent three years in charge of the New Orleans District. As a brigadier general, he was commander of the Corps' North Atlantic Division, covering military and civil works from Maine to Virginia. Now, from his division headquarters, in Vicksburg, he is in charge of the Mississippi Valley from Missouri to the Gulf. On a wall of his private office is a board of green slate. One day when I was interviewing him there, he spent much of the time making and erasing chalk diagrams. "Man against nature. That's what life's all about," he said as he sketched the concatenating forces at Old River and the controls the Corps had applied. He used only the middle third of the slate. The rest had been preëmpted. The words "Be Innovative, Be Responsive, and Operate with a Touch of Class" were chalked across the bottom. "Old River is a true representation of a confrontation with nature," he went on. "Folks recognized that Mother Nature, being what she is—having changed course many times—would do it again. Today, Mother Nature is working within a constrained environment in the lower Mississippi. Old River is the key element. Every facet of law below there relates to what goes on in this little out-of-the-way point that most folks have never heard about." Chalked across the upper third of the slate were the words "Do What's Right, and Be Prepared to Fight as Infantry When Required!!!"

Now, aboard the towboat Mississippi, the General is saying, "In terms of hydrology, what we've done here at Old River is stop time. We have, in effect, stopped time in terms of the distribution of flows. Man is directing the maturing process of the Atchafalaya and the lower Mississippi." There is nothing formal about these remarks. The General says that this journey downriver is meant to be "a floating convention." Listening to him is not a requirement. From the pilothouse to the fantail, people wander where they please, stopping here and again to converse in small groups.

Two floatplanes appear above the trees, descend, flare, and land side by side behind the Mississippi. The towboat reduces power, and the airplanes taxi into its wake. They carry four passengers from Morgan City—latecomers to the floating convention. They climb aboard, and the airplanes fly away. These four, making such effort to advance their special interests, are four among two million nine hundred thousand people whose livelihoods, safety, health, and quality of life are directly influenced by the Corps' controls at Old River. In years gone by, when there were no control structures, naturally there were no complaints. The water went where it pleased. People took it as it came. The delta was in a state of nature. But now that Old River is valved and metered there are two million nine hundred thousand potential complainers, very few of whom are reluctant to present a grievance to the Corps. When farmers want less water, for example, fishermen want more, and they all complain to the Corps. In General Sands' words, "We're always walkin' around with, by and large, the black hat on. There's no place in the U.S. where there are so many competing interests relating to one water resource."



Aboard the Mississippi, this is the primary theme. Oliver Houck, professor of ecoprudence, is heard to mutter, "What the Corps does with the water decides everything." And General Sands cheerfully remarks that every time he makes one of these trips he gets "beaten on the head and shoulders." He continues, "In most water-resources stories, you can identify two sides. Here there are many more. The crawfisherman and the shrimper come up within five minutes asking for opposite things. The crawfishermen say, 'Put more water in, the water is low.' Shrimpers don't want more water. They are benefitted by low water. Navigation interests say, 'The water is too low, don't take more away or you'll have to dredge.' Municipal interests say, 'Keep the water high or you'll increase saltwater intrusion.' In the high-water season, everybody is interested in less water. As the water starts dropping, upstream farmers say, 'Get the water off of us quicker.' But folks downstream don't want it quicker. As water levels go up, we divert some fresh water into marshes, because the marshes need it for the nutrients and the sedimentation, but oyster fishermen complain. They all complain except the ones who have seed-oyster beds, which are destroyed by excessive salinity. The variety of competing influences is phenomenal."

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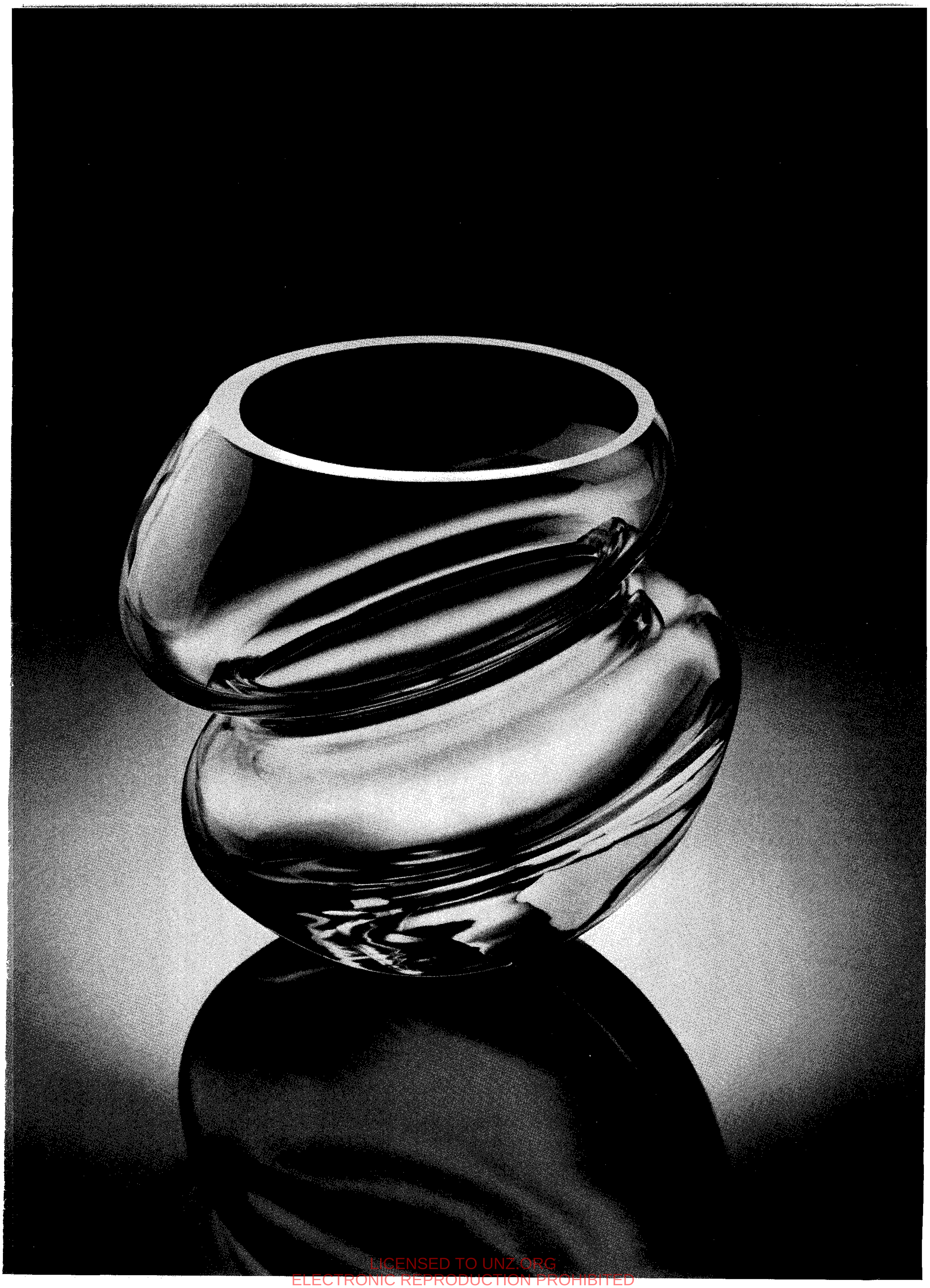


the Mississippi River is so far below sea level that a flow of at least a hundred and twenty thousand cubic feet per second is needed to hold back salt water and keep it below New Orleans, which drinks the river. Along the ragged edges of the Gulf, whole ecosystems depend on the relationship of fresh to salt water, which is in large part controlled by the Corps. Shrimp people want water to be brackish, waterfowl people want it fresh—a situation that causes National Marine Fisheries to do battle with United States Fish and Wildlife while both simultaneously attack the Corps. The industrial interests of the American Ruhr beseech the Corps to maintain their supply of fresh water. Agricultural pumping stations demand more fresh water for their rice but nervily ask the Corps to keep the sediment. Morgan City needs water to get oil boats and barges to rigs offshore, but if Morgan City gets too much water it's the end of Morgan City. Port authorities present special needs, and the owners of grain elevators, and the owners of coal elevators, barge interests, flood-control districts, levee boards. As General Sands says, finishing the list, "A guy who wants to put a new dock in has to come to us." People suspect the Corps of favoring other people. In addition to all the things the Corps actually does and does not do, there are infinite actions it is imagined to do, infinite actions it is imagined not to do, and infinite actions it is imagined to be capable of doing, because the Corps has been conceded the almighty role of God.

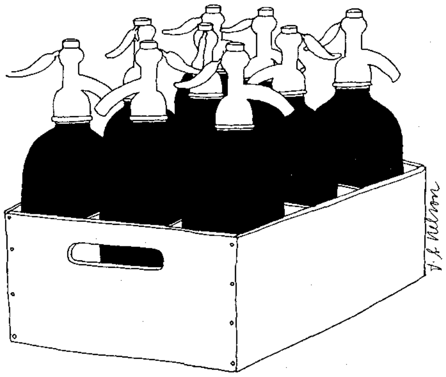
The towboat enters the Atchafalaya at an unprepossessing T in a jungle of phreatophytic trees. Atchafalaya. The "a"s are broad, the word rhymes with "jambalaya," and the accents are on the second and fourth syllables. Among navigable rivers, the Atchafalaya is widely described as one of the most treacherous in the world, but it just lies there quiet and smooth. It lies there like a big alligator in a low slough, with time on its side, waiting—waiting to outwait the Corps of Engineers—and hunkering down ever lower in its bed and presenting a sort of maw to the Mississippi, into which the river could fall. In the pilothouse, standing behind Jorge Cano and John Dugger as they swing the ship to port and head south, I find myself remembering an exchange between Cano and Rabalais a couple of days ago, when Cano was speculating about the Atchafalaya's chances of capturing the Mississippi someday despite all efforts to prevent it from doing so. "Mother Nature is patient," he said. "Mother Nature has more time than we do."

Rabalais said, "She has nothing but time."

Frederic Chatry happens to be in the pilothouse, too, as does Fred Bayley. Both are civilians: Chatry, chief engineer of the New Orleans District; Bayley, chief engineer of the Lower Mississippi Valley Division. Chatry is short and slender, a courtly and formal man, his uniform a bow tie. He is saying that before the control structures were built water used to flow in either direction through Old River. It would flow into the Mississippi if the Red happened to be higher. This was known as a reversal, and the last reversal occurred in 1945. The enlarging Atchafalaya was by then so powerful in its draw that it took all of the Red and kept it. "The more water the Atchafalaya takes, the bigger it gets; the bigger it gets, the more water it takes. The only thing that interrupts it is Old River Control. If we had not interrupted it, the main river would now be the Atchafalaya, below this point. If you left it to its own devices, the end result had to be that it would become the master stream. If that were to happen, below Old River the Mississippi reach would be unstable. Silt would fill it in. The Corps could not cope with it. Old River to Baton Rouge would fill in. River traffic from the north would stop. Everything would go to pot in the delta. We couldn't cope. It would be plugged."

I ask to what extent they ever contemplate that the structures at Old River might fail.

Bayley is quick to answer—Fred Bayley, a handsome sandy-haired man in a regimental tie and a cool tan suit, with the contemplative manner of an academic and none of the defenses of a challenged engineer. "Anything can fail," he says. "In most of our projects, we try to train natural effects instead of taking them head on. I never approach anything we do with the idea that it can't fail. That is sticking your head in the sand."



We are making twelve knots on a two-and-a-half-knot current under bright sun and cottony bits of cloud—flying along between the Atchafalaya levees, between the river-batcher trees. We are running down the reach above Simmesport, but only a distant bridge attests to that fact. From the river you cannot see the country. From the country you cannot see the river. I once looked down at this country from the air, in a light plane, and although it is called a floodway—this segment of it the West Atchafalaya Floodway—it is full of agriculture, in plowed geometries of brown, green, and tan. The Atchafalaya from above looks like the Connecticut winding past New Hampshire floodplain farms. If you look up, you do not see Mt. Washington. You see artificial ponds, now and again, as far as the horizon—square ponds, dotted with the cages of crawfish. You see dark-green pastureland, rail fences, cows with short fat shadows.

The unexpected happens—unthinkable, unfortunate, but not unimaginable. At first with a modest lurch, and then with a more pronounced lurch, and then with a profound structural shudder, the Mississippi is captured by the Atchafalaya. The mid-American flagship of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has run aground.

AFTER going on line, in 1963, the control structures at Old River had to wait ten years to prove what they could do. The nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties were secure in the Mississippi Valley. In human terms, a generation passed with no disastrous floods. The Mississippi River and Tributaries Project—the Corps' total repertory of defenses from Cairo, Illinois, southward—seemed to have met its design purpose: to confine and conduct the run of the river, to see it safely into the Gulf. The Corps looked upon this accomplishment with understandable pride and, without intended diminution of respect for its enemy, issued a statement of victory: "We harnessed it, straightened it, regularized it, shackled it."

Then, in the fall of 1972, the winter of 1973, river stages were higher than normal, reducing the system's tolerance for what might come in spring. In the upper valley, snows were unusually heavy. In the South came a season of exceptional rains. During the uneventful era that was about to end, the Mississippi's main channel, in its relative lethargy, had given up a lot of volume to accumulations of sediment. High water, therefore, would flow that much higher. As the spring runoff came down the tributaries, collected, and approached, computers gave warning that the mainline levees were not sufficient to contain it. Eight hundred miles of frantically filled sandbags were added to the levees. Bulldozers added potato ridges—barriers of uncompacted dirt. While this was going on, more rain was falling. In the southern part of the valley, twenty inches fell in a day and a half.

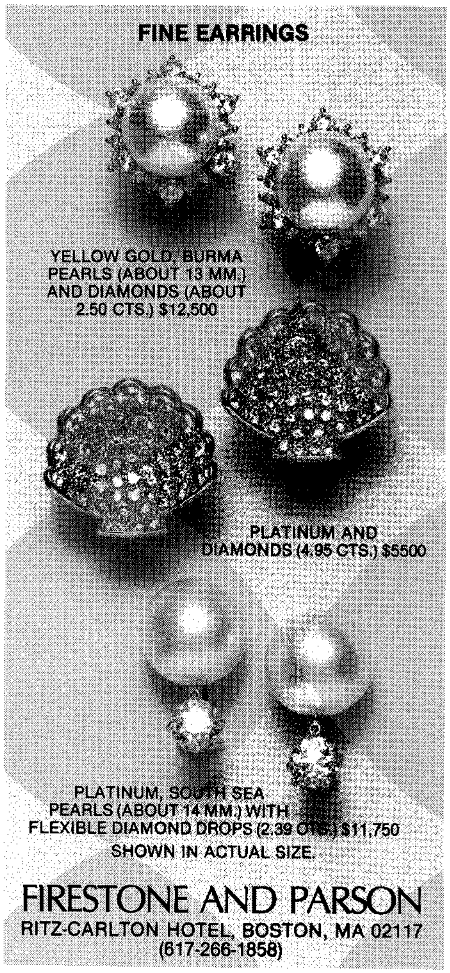
At Old River Control on an ordinary day, when the stilling basin sounds like Victoria Falls but otherwise the country is calm and dry—when sandy spaces and stands of trees fill up the view between the structure and the Mississippi—an almost academic effort is required to visualize a slab of water six stories high, spread to the ends of perspective. That is how it was in 1973. During the sustained spring high water—week after week after week—the gathered drainage of Middle America came to Old River in units exceeding two million cubic feet a second. Twenty-five per cent of that left the Mississippi channel and went to the Atchafalaya. In aerial view, trees and fields were no longer visible, and the gated stronghold of the Corps seemed vulnerable in the extreme—a narrow causeway, a thin fragile line across a brown sea.

The Corps had built Old River Control to control just about as much as was passing through it. In mid-March, when the volume began to approach that amount, curiosity got the best of Raphael G. Kazmann, author of a book called "Modern Hydrology" and professor of civil engineering at Louisiana State University. Kazmann got into his car, crossed the Mississippi on the high bridge at Baton Rouge, and made his way north to Old River. He parked, got out, and began to walk the structure. An extremely low percentage of its five hundred and sixty-six feet eradicated his curiosity. "That whole miserable structure was vibrating," he recalled in 1986, adding that he had felt as if he were standing on a platform at a small rural train station when "a fully loaded freight goes through." Kazmann opted not to wait for the caboose. "I thought, This thing weighs two hundred thousand tons. When two hundred thousand tons vibrates like this, this is no place for R. G. Kazmann. I got into my car, turned around, and got the hell out of there. I was just a professor—and, thank God, not responsible."

Kazmann says that the Tennessee River and the Missouri River were "the two main culprits" in the 1973 flood. In one high water and another, the big contributors vary around the watershed. An ultimate deluge might possibly involve them all. After Kazmann went home from Old River that time in 1973, he did his potamology indoors for a while, assembling daily figures. In some of the numbers he felt severe vibrations. In his words, "I watched the Ohio like a hawk, because if that had come up, I thought, Katie, bar the door!"

The water was plenty high as it was, and continuously raged through the structure. Nowhere in the Mississippi Valley were velocities greater than in this one place, where the waters made their hydraulic jump, plunging over what Kazmann describes as "concrete falls" into the regime of the Atchafalaya. The structure and its stilling basin had been configured to dissipate energy—but not nearly so much energy. The excess force was attacking the environment of the structure. A large eddy had formed. Unbeknownst to anyone, its swirling power was excavating sediments by the inflow apron of the structure. Even larger holes had formed under the apron itself. Unfortunately, the main force of the Mississippi was crashing against the south side of the inflow channel, producing unplanned turbulence. The control structure had been set up near the outside of a bend of the river, and closer to the Mississippi than many engineers thought wise.

On the outflow side—where the water fell to the level of the Atchafalaya—a hole had developed that was larger and deeper than a football stadium, and with much the same shape. It was hidden, of course, far beneath the chop of wild water. The Corps had long since been compelled to leave all eleven gates wide open, in order to reduce to the greatest extent possible the force that was shaking the structure, and so there was no alternative to aggravating the effects on the bed of the channel. In addition to the structure's weight, what was holding it in



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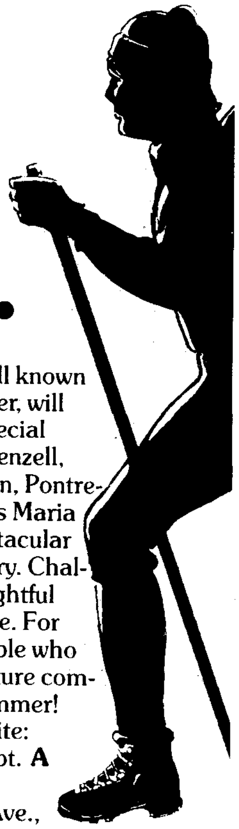

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place was a millipede of stilts—steel H-beams that reached down at various angles, as pilings, ninety feet through sands and silts, through clayey peats and organic mucks. There never was a question of anchoring such a fortress in rock. The shallowest rock was seven thousand feet straight down. In three places below the structure, sheet steel went into the substrate like fins; but the integrity of the structure depended essentially on the H-beams, and vehicular traffic continued to cross it en route to San Luis Rey.

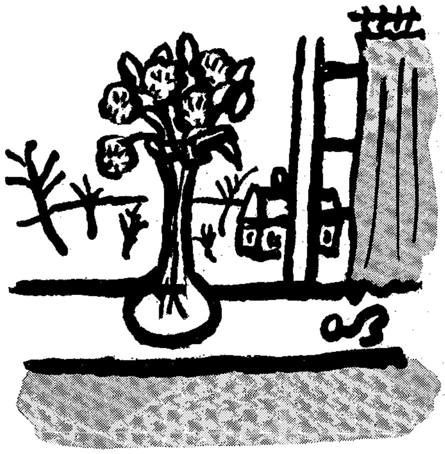
Then, as now, LeRoy Dugas was the person whose hand controlled Old River Control—a thought that makes him smile. "We couldn't afford to close any of the gates," he remarked to me one day at Old River. "Too much water was passing through the structure. Water picked up riprap off the bottom in front, and rammed it through to the tail bed." The riprap included derrick stones, and each stone weighed seven tons. On the level of the road deck, the vibrations increased. The operator of a moving crane let the crane move without him and waited for it at the end of the structure. Dugie continued, "You could get on the structure with your automobile and open the door and it would close the door." The crisis recalled the magnitude of "the '27 high water," when Dugie was a baby. Up the valley somewhere, during the '27 high water, was a railroad bridge with a train sitting on it loaded with coal. The train had been put there because its weight might help keep the bridge in place, but the bridge, vibrating in the floodwater, produced so much friction that the coal in the gondolas caught fire. Soon the bridge, the train, and the glowing coal fell into the water.

One April evening in 1973—at the height of the flood—a fisherman walked onto the structure. There is, after all, order in the universe, and some things take precedence over impending disasters. On the inflow side, facing the Mississippi, the structure was bracketed by a pair of guide walls that reached out like curving arms to bring in the water. Close by the guide wall at the south end was the swirling eddy, which by now had become a whirlpool. There was other motion as well—or so it seemed. The fisherman went to find Dugas, in his command post at the north end of the structure, and told him the guide wall had moved. Dugie told the fisherman he was seeing things. The fisherman nodded affirmatively.

When Dugie himself went to look at the guide wall, he looked at it for the last time. "It was slipping into the river, into the inflow channel." Slowly it dipped, sank, broke. Its foundations were gone. There was nothing below it but water. Professor Kazmann likes to say that this was when the Corps became "scared green." Whatever the engineers may have felt, as soon as the water began to recede they set about learning the dimensions of the damage. The structure was obviously undermined, but how much so, and where? What was solid, what was not? What was directly below the gates and the roadway? With a diamond drill, in a central position, they bored the first of many holes in the structure. When they had penetrated to basal levels, they lowered a television camera into the hole. They saw fish.

THIS was scarcely the first time that an attempt to control the Mississippi had failed. Old River, 1973, was merely the most emblematic place and moment where, in the course of three centuries, failure had occurred. From the beginnings of settlement, failure was the par expectation with respect to the river—a fact generally masked by the powerful fabric of ambition that impelled people to build towns and cities where almost any camper would be loath to pitch a tent.

If you travel by canoe through the river swamps of Louisiana, you may very well grow uneasy as the sun is going down. You look around for a site—a place to sleep, a place to cook. There is no *terra firma.* Nothing is solider than duckweed, resting on the water like green burlap. Quietly, you slide through the forest, breaking out now and again into acreages of open lake. You study the dusk for some dark cap of uncovered ground. Seeing one at last, you occupy it, limited though it may be. Your tent site may be smaller than your tent, but in this amphibious milieu you have found yourself terrain. You have established yourself in much the same manner that the French established New Orleans. So what does it matter if your leg spends the night in the water?



The water is from the state of New York, the state of Idaho, the province of Alberta, and everywhere below that frame. Far above Old River are places where the floodplain is more than a hundred miles wide. Spaniards in the sixteenth century came upon it at the wrong time, saw an ocean moving south, and may have been discouraged. Where the delta began, at Old River, the water spread out even more—through a palimpsest of bayous and distributary streams in forested paludal basins—but this did not dissuade the French. For military and commercial purposes, they wanted a city in such country. They laid it out in 1718, only months before a great flood. Even as New Orleans was rising, its foundations filled with water. The message in the landscape could not have been more clear: like the aboriginal people, you could fish and forage and move on, but you could not build there—you could not create a city, or even a cluster of modest steadings—without declaring war on nature. You did not have to be Dutch to understand this, or French to ignore it. The people of southern Louisiana have often been compared unfavorably with farmers of the pre-Aswan Nile, who lived on high ground, farmed low ground, and permitted floods to come and go according to the rhythms of nature. There were differences in Louisiana, though. There was no high ground worth mentioning, and planters had to live on their plantations. The waters of the Nile were warm; the Mississippi brought cold northern floods that sometimes stood for months, defeating agriculture for the year. If people were to farm successfully in the rich loams of the natural levees—or anywhere nearby—they could not allow the Mississippi to continue in its natural state. Herbert Kassner, the division's public-relations director, once remarked to me, "This river used to meander all over its floodplain. People would move their tepees, and that was that. You can't move Vicksburg."

When rivers go over their banks, the spreading water immediately slows up, dropping the heavier sediments. The finer the silt, the farther it is scattered, but so much falls close to the river that natural levees rise through time. The first houses of New Orleans were built on the natural levees, overlooking the river. In the face of disaster, there was no better place to go. If there was to be a New Orleans, the levees themselves would have to be raised, and the owners of the houses were ordered to do the raising. This law (1724) was about as effective as the ordinances that compel homeowners and shopkeepers in the North to shovel snow off their sidewalks. Odd as it seems now, those early levees were only three feet high, and they were rife with imperfections. To the extent that they were effective at all, they owed a great deal to the country across the river, where there were no artificial levees, and waters that went over the bank flowed to the horizon. In 1727, the French colonial governor declared the New Orleans levee complete, adding that within a year it would be extended a number of miles up and down the river, making the community floodproof. The governor's name was Perrier. If words could stop water, Perrier had found them—initiating a durable genre.

In 1735, New Orleans went under—and again in 1785. The intervals—like those between earthquakes in San Francisco—were generally long enough to allow the people to build up a false sense of security. In response to the major floods, they extended and raised the levees. A levee appeared across the river from New Orleans, and by 1812 the west bank was leveed to the vicinity of Old River, a couple of hundred miles upstream. At that time, the east bank was leveed as far as Baton Rouge. Neither of the levees was continuous. Both protected plantation land. Where the country remained as the Choctaws had known it, floodwaters poured to the side, reducing the threat elsewhere. Land was not cheap—forty acres cost three thousand dollars—but so great was the demand for riverfront plantations that by 1828 the levees in southern Louisiana were continuous, the river artificially confined. Just in case the levees should fail, some plantation houses—among their fields of sugarcane, their long bright rows of oranges—were built on Indian burial mounds. In 1828, Bayou Manchac was closed. In the whole of the Mississippi's delta plain, Bayou Manchac happened to have been the only distributary that went east. It was dammed at the source. Its discharge would no longer ease the pressures of the master stream.

By this time, Henry Shreve had appeared on the scene—in various ways to change it forever. He was the consummate riverman: boatman, pilot, entrepreneur, empirical naval architect. He is noted as the creator of the flat-hulled layer-cake stern-wheel Mississippi steamboat, its shallow draft the result of moving the machinery up from below to occupy its own deck. The Mississippi steamboat was not invented, however. It evolved. And Shreve's contribution was less in its configuration than its power. A steamboat built and piloted by Henry Shreve travelled north against the current as far as Louisville. He demonstrated that commerce could go both ways. Navigation was inconvenienced, though, by hazards in the river—the worst of which were huge trees that had drifted south over the years and become stuck in various ways. One kind was rigid in the riverbed and stood up like a spear. It was called a planter. Another, known as a sawyer, sawed up and down with the vagaries of the current, and was likely to rise suddenly in the path of a boat and destroy it. In the Yukon River, such logs—eternally bowing—are known as preachers. In the Mississippi, whatever the arrested logs were called individually, they were all "snags," and after the Army engineers had made Shreve, a civilian, their Superintendent of Western River Improvements he went around like a dentist yanking snags. The multihulled snag boats were devices of his invention. In the Red River, he undertook to disassemble a "raft"—uprooted trees by the tens of thousands that were stopping navigation for a hundred and sixty miles. Shreve cleared eighty miles in one year. Meanwhile, at 31 degrees north latitude (about halfway between Vicksburg and Baton Rouge) he made a bold move on the Mississippi. In the sinusoidal path of the river, any meander tended to grow until its loop was so large it would cut itself off. At 31 degrees north latitude was a west-bending loop that was eighteen miles around and had so nearly doubled back upon itself that Shreve decided to help it out. He adapted one of his snag boats as a dredge, and after two weeks of digging across the narrow neck he had a good swift current flowing. The Mississippi quickly took over. The width of Shreve's new channel doubled in two days. A few days more and it had become the main channel of the river.

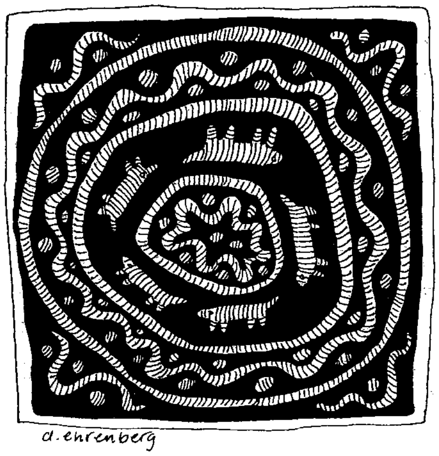
The great loop at 31 degrees north happened to be where the Red-Atchafalaya conjoined the Mississippi, like a pair of parentheses back to back. Steamboats had had difficulty there in the colliding waters. Shreve's purpose in cutting off the loop was to give the boats a smoother shorter way to go, and, as an incidental, to speed up the Mississippi, lowering, however slightly, its crests in flood. One effect of the cutoff was to increase the flow of water out of the Mississippi and into the Atchafalaya, advancing the date of ultimate capture. Where the flow departed from the Mississippi now, it followed an arm of the cutoff meander. This short body of water soon became known as Old River. In less than a fortnight, it had been removed as a segment of the main-stem Mississippi and restyled as a form of surgical drain.

In city and country, riverfront owners became sensitive about the fact that the levees they were obliged to build were protecting not only their properties but also the properties behind them. Levee districts were established—administered by levee boards—to spread the cost. The more the levees confined the river, the more destructive it became when they failed. A place where water broke through was known as a crevasse—a source of terror no less effective than a bursting dam—and the big ones were memorialized, like other great disasters, in a series of proper names: the Macarty Crevasse (1816), the Sauvé Crevasse (1849). Levee inspectors were given power to call out male slaves—aged fifteen to sixty—whose owners lived within seven miles of trouble. With the approach of mid-century, the levees were averaging six feet—twice their original height—and calculations indicated that the flow line would rise. Most levee districts were not populous enough to cover the multiplying costs, so the United States Congress, in 1850, wrote the Swamp and Overflow Land Act. It is possible that no friend of Peter had ever been so generous in handing over his money to Paul. The federal government deeded millions of acres of swampland to states along the river, and the states sold the acreage to pay for the levees. The Swamp Act gave eight and a half million acres of river swamps and marshes to Louisiana alone. Other states, in aggregate, got twenty million more. Since time immemorial, these river swamps had been the natural reservoirs where floodwaters were taken in and held, and gradually released as the flood went down. Where there was timber (including virgin cypress), the swampland was sold for seventy-five cents an acre, twelve and a half cents where there were no trees. The new owners were for the most part absentee. An absentee was a Yankee. The new owners drained much of the swampland, turned it into farmland, and demanded the protection of new and larger levees. At this point, Congress might have asked itself which was the act and which was the swamp.

River stages, in their wide variations, became generally higher through time, as the water was presented with fewer outlets. People began to wonder if the levees could ever be high enough and strong enough to make the river safe. Possibly a system of dams and reservoirs in the tributaries of the upper valley could hold water back and release it in the drier months, and possibly a system of spillways and floodways could be fashioned in the lower valley to distribute water when big floods arrived. Beginning in the eighteen-fifties, these notions were the subject of virulent debate among civilian and military engineers. Four major floods in ten years and thirty-two disastrous crevasses in a single spring were not enough to suggest to the Corps that levees alone might never be equal to the job. The Corps, as things stood, was not yet in charge. District by district, state by state, the levee system was still a patchwork effort. There was no high command in the fight against the water. In one of the Corps' official histories, the situation is expressed in this rather preoccupied sentence: "By 1860, it had become increasingly obvious that a successful war over such an immense battleground could be waged only by a consolidated army under one authority." While the Civil War came and went, the posture of the river did not change. Vicksburg fell but did not move. In the floods of 1862, 1866, and 1867, levees failed. Catastrophes notwithstanding, Bayou Plaquemine—a major distributary of the Mississippi and a natural escape for large percentages of spring high water—was closed in 1868, its junction with the Mississippi sealed by an earthen dam. Even at normal stages, the Mississippi was beginning to stand up like a large vein on the back of a hand. The river of the eighteen-seventies ran higher than it ever had before.

In 1879, Congress at last created the Mississippi River Commission, which included civilians but granted hegemony to the Corps. The president of the commission would always be an Army engineer, and all decisions were subject to veto by the commandant of the Corps. Imperiously, Congress ordered the commission to "prevent destructive floods," and left it to the Corps to say how. The Corps remained committed to the argument that tributary dams and reservoirs and downstream spillways would create more problems than they would solve. "Hold by levees" was the way to do the job.

The national importance of the commission is perhaps illuminated by the fact that one of its first civilian members was Benjamin Harrison. Another was James B. Eads, probably the most brilliant engineer who has ever addressed his attention to the Mississippi River. As a young man, he had walked around on its bottom under a device of his own invention that he called a submarine. As a naval architect in the Civil War, he had designed the first American ironclads. Later, at St. Louis, he had built the first permanent bridge across the main stem of the river south of the Missouri. More recently, in defiance of the cumulative wisdom of nearly everyone in his profession, he had solved a primal question in anadromous navigation: how to get into the river. The mouth was defended by a mud-lump blockade—impenetrable masses of sediment dumped by the river as it reached the still waters of the Gulf. Dredging was hopeless. What would make a channel deep enough for ships? The government wouldn't finance him, so Eads bet his own considerable fortune on an elegant idea: he built parallel jetties in the river's mouth. They pinched the currents. The accelerated water dug out and maintained a navigable channel.



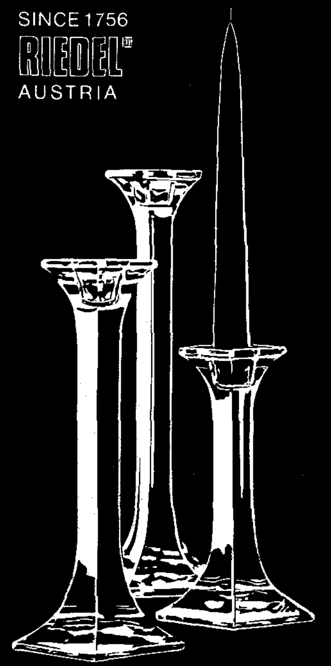
To the Corps' belief that a river confined by levees would similarly look after itself the success of the jetties gave considerable reinforcement. And Eads added words that spoke louder than his actions. "If the profession of an engineer were not based upon exact science," he said, "I might tremble for the result, in view of the immensity of the interests dependent on my success. But every atom that moves onward in the river, from the moment it leaves its home among the crystal springs or mountain snows, throughout the fifteen hundred leagues of its devious pathway, until it is finally lost in the vast waters of the Gulf, is controlled by laws as fixed and certain as those which direct the majestic march of the heavenly spheres. Every phenomenon and apparent eccentricity of the river—its scouring and depositing action, its caving banks, the formation of the bars at its mouth, the effect of the waves and tides of the sea upon its currents and deposits—is controlled by law as immutable as the Creator, and the engineer need only to be insured that he does not ignore the existence of any of these laws, to feel positively certain of the results he aims at."

When the commission was created, Mark Twain was forty-three. A book he happened to be working on was "Life on the Mississippi." Through a character called Uncle Mumford, he remarked that "four years at West Point, and plenty of books and schooling, will learn a man a good deal, I reckon, but it won't learn him the river." Twain also wrote, "One who knows the Mississippi will promptly aver—not aloud but to himself—that ten thousand River Commissions, with the mines of the world at their back, cannot tame that lawless stream, cannot curb it or confine it, cannot say to it, 'Go here,' or 'Go there,' and make it obey; cannot save a shore which it has sentenced; cannot bar its path with an obstruction which it will not tear down, dance over, and laugh at. But a discreet man will not put these things into spoken words; for the West Point engineers have not their superiors anywhere; they know all that can be known of their abstruse science; and so, since they conceive that they can fetter and handcuff that river and boss him, it is but wisdom for the unscientific man to keep still, lie low, and wait till they do it. Captain Eads, with his jetties, has done a work at the mouth of the Mississippi which seemed clearly impossible; so we do not feel full confidence now to prophesy against like impossibilities. Otherwise one would pipe out and say the Commission might as well bully the comets in their courses and undertake to make them behave, as try to bully the Mississippi into right and reasonable conduct.”

In 1882 came the most destructive flood of the nineteenth century. After breaking the levees in two hundred and eighty-four crevasses, the water spread out as much as seventy miles. In the fertile lands on the two sides of Old River, plantations were deeply submerged, and livestock survived in flatboats. A floating journalist who reported these scenes in the March 29th New Orleans *Times-Democrat* said, “The current running down the Atchafalaya was very swift, the Mississippi showing a predilection in that direction, which needs only to be seen to enforce the opinion of that river’s desperate endeavors to find a short way to the Gulf.” The capture of the Mississippi, in other words, was already obvious enough to be noticed by a journalist. Seventy-eight years earlier—just after the Louisiana Purchase—the Army officer who went to take possession of the new country observed the Atchafalaya “completely obstructed by logs and other material” and said in his report, “Were it not for these obstructions, the probability is that the Mississippi would soon find a much nearer way to the Gulf than at present, particularly as it manifests a constant inclination to vary its course.” The head of the Atchafalaya was plugged with logs for thirty miles. The raft was so compact that El Camino Real, the Spanish trail coming in from Texas, crossed the Atchafalaya near its head, and cattle being driven toward the Mississippi walked across the logs. The logjam was Old River Control Structure No. 0. Gradually, it was disassembled, freeing the Atchafalaya to lower its plain. Snag boats worked on it, and an attempt was made to clear it with fire. The flood of 1863 apparently broke it open, and at once the Atchafalaya began to widen and deepen, increasing its draw on the Mississippi. Shreve’s clearing of the Red River had also increased the flow of the Atchafalaya. The interventional skill of human engineers, which would be called upon in the twentieth century to stop the great shift at Old River, did much in the nineteenth to hurry it up.

For forty-eight years, the Mississippi River Commission and the Corps of Engineers adhered strictly to the “hold by levees” policy—levees, and levees only. It was important that no water be allowed to escape the river, because its full power would be most effective in scouring the bed, deepening the channel, increasing velocity, lowering stages, and preventing destructive floods. This was the hydraulic and hydrological philosophy not only of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers but also of the great seventeenth-century savant Domenico Guglielmini, whose insights, ultimately, were to prove so ineffective in the valley of the Po. In 1885, one of General Sands’ predecessors said, “The commission is distinctly committed to the idea of closing all outlets. . . . It has consistently opposed the fallacy known as the ‘Outlet System.’ ”

Slaves with wheelbarrows started the levees. Immigrants with wheelbarrows replaced the slaves. Mule-drawn scrapers replaced the wheelbarrows, but not until the twentieth century. Fifteen hundred miles of earthen walls—roughly six, then nine, then twelve feet high, and a hundred feet from side to side—were built by men with shovels. They wove huge mats of willow poles and laid them down in cutbanks as revetments. When floods came, they went out to defend their defenses, and, in the words of a Corps publication, the effort was comparable to “the rigors of the battlefield.” Nature was not always the only enemy. Anywhere along the river, people were safer if the levee failed across the way. If you lived on the east side, you might not be sad if water flooded west. You were also safer if the levee broke on your own side downstream. Armed patrols went up and down the levees. They watched for sand boils—signs of seepage that could open a crevasse from within. And they watched for private



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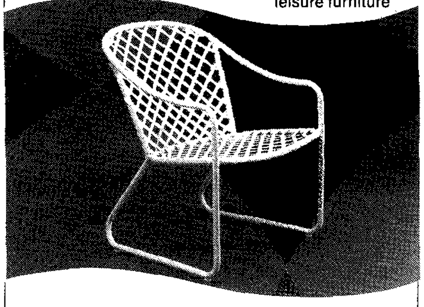

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commandos, landing in the dark with dynamite.

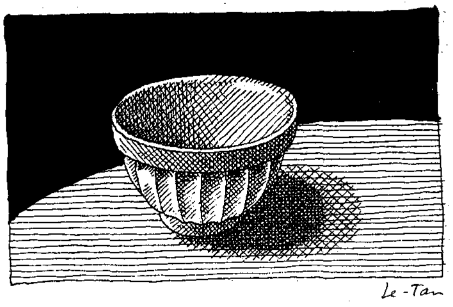
Bayou Lafourche, a major distributary, was dammed in 1904. In something like twenty years, the increased confinement of the river had elevated floodwaters in Memphis by an average of about eight feet. The Corps remained loyal to the teachings of Guglielmini, and pronouncements were still forthcoming that the river was at last under control and destructive floods would not occur again. Declarations of that sort had been made in the quiet times before the great floods of 1884, 1890, 1891, 1897, 1898, and 1903, and they would be made again before 1912, 1913, 1922, and 1927.

The '27 high water tore the valley apart. On both sides of the river, levees crevassed from Cairo to the Gulf, and in the same thousand miles the flood destroyed every bridge. It killed hundreds of people, thousands of animals. Overbank, it covered twenty-six thousand square miles. It stayed on the land as much as three months. New Orleans was saved by blowing up a levee downstream. Yet the total volume of the 1927 high water was nowhere near a record. It was not a hundred-year flood. It was a form of explosion, achieved by the confining levees.

THE levees of the nineteen-twenties were about six times as high as their earliest predecessors, but really no more effective. In a sense, they had been an empirical experiment—in aggregate, fifteen hundred miles of trial and error. They could be—and they would be—raised even higher. But in 1927 the results of the experiment at last came clear. The levees were helping to aggravate the problem they were meant to solve. With walls alone, one could only build an absurdly elevated aqueduct. Resistance times the resistance distance amplified the force of nature. Every phenomenon and apparent eccentricity of the river might be subject to laws as fixed and certain as those which direct the majestic march of the heavenly spheres, but, if so, the laws were inexactly understood. The Corps had attacked Antaeus without quite knowing who he was.

Congress appropriated three hundred million dollars to find out. This was more money in one bill—the hopefully titled Flood Control Act (1928)—than had been spent on Mississippi levees in all of Colonial and American history. These were the start-up funds for the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project, the coordinated defenses that would still be incomplete in the nineteen-eighties and would ultimately cost about seven billion dollars. The project would raise levees and build new ones, pave cutbanks, sever loops to align the current, and hold back large volumes of water with substantial dams in tributary streams. Dredges known as dustpans would take up sediment by the millions of tons. Stone dikes would appear in strategic places, forcing the water to go around them, preventing the channel from spreading out. Most significantly, though, the project would acknowledge the superiority of the force with which it was meant to deal. It would give back to the river some measure of the freedom lost as the delta's distributaries one by one were sealed. It would go into the levees in certain places and build gates that could be opened in times of extraordinary flood. The water coming out of such spillways would enter new systems of levees guiding it down floodways to the Gulf. But how many spillways? How many floodways? How many tributary dams? Calculating maximum storms, frequency of storms, maximum snowmelts, sustained saturation of the upper valley, coincident storms in scattered parts of the watershed, the Corps reached for the figure that would float Noah. The round number was three million—that is, three million cubic feet per second coming past Old River. This was twenty-five per cent above the 1927 high. The expanded control system, with its variety of devices, would have to be designed to process that. Various names were given to this blue-moon superflow, this concatenation of recorded moments written in the future unknown. It was called the Design Flood. Alternatively, it was called the Project Flood.

Bonnet Carre was the first spillway—completed in 1931, roughly thirty miles upriver from New Orleans. The water was meant to spill into Lake Pontchartrain and go on into the Gulf, dispersing eight and a half per cent of the Project Flood. Bonnet Carre (locally pronounced "Bonny Carey") would replace dynamite in the defense of New Orleans. When the great crest of 1937 came down the river—setting an all-time record at Natchez—enough of the new improvements were in place to see it through in relative safety, with the final and supreme test presented at Bonnet Carre, where the gates were opened for the first time. At the high point, more than two hundred thousand feet per second were diverted into Lake Pontchartrain, and the flow that went on by New Orleans left the city low and dry.



For the Corps of Engineers, not to mention the people of the southern parishes, the triumph of 1937 brought fresh courage, renewed confidence—a sense once again that the river could be controlled. Major General Harley B. Ferguson, the division commander, became a regional military hero. It was he who had advocated the project's many cutoffs, all made in the decade since 1927, which shortened the river by more than a hundred miles, reducing the amount of friction working against the water. The more distance, the more friction. Friction slows the river and raises its level. The mainline levees were rebuilt, extended, reinforced—and their height was almost doubled, reaching thirty feet. There was now a Great Wall of China running up each side of the river, with the difference that while the levees were each about as long as the Great Wall they were in many places higher and in cross-section ten times as large. Work continued on the floodways. There was one in Missouri that let water out of the river and put it back into the river a few miles downstream. But the principal conduit of release—without which Bonnet Carre would be about as useful as a bailing can—was the route of the Atchafalaya. Since the lower part of it was the largest river swamp in North America, it was, by nature, ready for the storage of water. The Corps built guide levees about seventeen miles apart to shape the discharge toward Atchafalaya Bay, incidentally establishing a framework for the swamp. In the northern Atchafalaya, near Old River, they built a three-chambered system of floodways involving so many intersecting levees that the country soon resembled a cranberry farm developed on an epic scale. The West Atchafalaya Floodway had

"I turned two weeks in Utah into the vacation of a lifetime."

—Dennis Hanson
Bend, Oregon

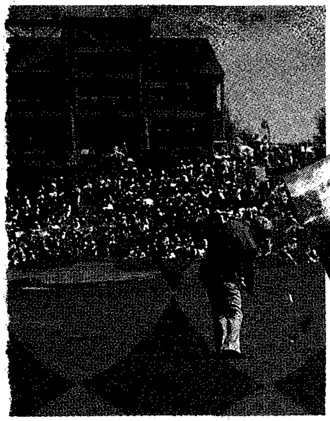
—Bill Hughes
Los Angeles, California

—Rick Sanders
Bedfordshire, England

—Dewitt Jones
Bolinas, California

played about this spacious, clean hub of the West. Salt Lake City's expansive Old World-like boulevards combine solid turn-of-the-century architecture and high-tech cosmopolitan ambiance. Downtown is replete with a new cultural center that includes the elegantly restored Capitol Theatre for Ballet West and the ultra modern concert hall for the Utah Symphony. Next door, in the huge, drum-like Salt Palace convention complex, it was off-season for the NBA Utah Jazz.

Bo and I talked of a special feeling in the city, something traditional and comfortable, yet energetic and unfailingly cheerful. I wasn't concerned about the kids off by themselves, having splashing fun in expansive, green Liberty Park. For Bo and me there was the fascination of Temple Square, the emerald of Mormonism that receives nearly as many annual visitors as Yellowstone National Park. We found secure nighttime walks along the cooling avenues of downtown, shopping in malls that smelled of fudge and flowers, and a plentitude of splendid eateries.

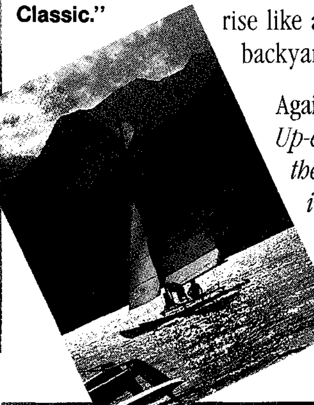


Golf in Utah's mountains is superb as reconized by the PGA Senior Tournament "The Jeremy Ranch Showdown Classic."

Time-lapse photography lends a surrealistic aura to the annual Utah Arts Festival in downtown Salt Lake City. Many fine restaurants and clubs add diversity to the city's nightlife.

In all, Salt Lake City showed an unexpected delightful disposition that kept us hesitant about moving on. But at the same time we were being lured into the mountains by granite peaks which rise like a battlement out of the backyards of the city.

Again, from my journal:
Up-canyon, I hardly held
the road against the
impact of its beauty.
Stark, granite walls
choked with color.
Lovely resorts
emerge from cliffs
and forests.



Recreational opportunities abound — from windsurfing to wildflowers.

Summer activities range from Bach to backpacking; seemingly everywhere are small outdoor classes in music, art, dance and environment. Tram ride to summit of Hidden Peak (11,000 feet) gave a glorious 360-degrees of the sheer weight of this country. Even Brendan lost interest in picking up rocks and just wanted to look.

Nowhere in North America is spectacular skiing more accessible than in the canyons of the Wasatch Front. There are a dozen well-developed resorts, like Snowbird and Alta, Park City and Deer Valley, all within an easy hour's drive of Salt Lake International Airport.

The splendid accessibility of the alpine country is not lost on the summer family visitor. Above Alta, we hiked a combination of old mining road and backpacking trail to the Albion Basin. As Bo and I strolled the fields, we looked at dozens of wildflower varieties still awash in the high meadows. Following the kids' directions ("Wow! Look at this!" "Come over here!"), we talked of the fact that we were within 15 minutes of the outskirts of the city and yet were enfolded in a mountainside that had changed little since the first mountain man clambered over the Rockies' spine.

As in Salt Lake City and throughout the rest of the trip, we moved together as a family, and yet there was something of special interest for everyone. An understanding both about Utah and about this kind of family travel was emerging. Utah was catching hold. Splendid country, something for everyone.

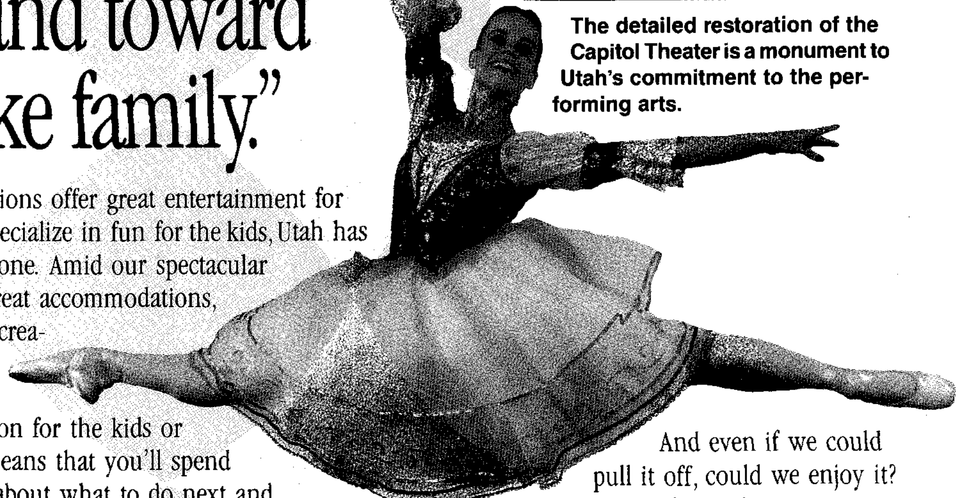
(Continued on next page.)

“We left feeling, both among ourselves and toward Utah, like family.”

While some destinations offer great entertainment for adults and others specialize in fun for the kids, Utah has something for everyone. Amid our spectacular scenery, Utah has great accommodations, entertainment and recreation. This means you don't have to sacrifice your vacation for the kids or vice versa. It also means that you'll spend less time worrying about what to do next and more time enjoying one another's company. After all, isn't that what a family vacation is all about?

Dennis Hanson was the perfect writer to investigate our claim. It wasn't necessarily that he was a superb journalist (he has written for *Forbes, National Geographic,* and the *Smithsonian* magazines), nor was it that he and his wife Bo are world travelers. It was simply that Dennis and Bo are the parents of Brendan, 5, Blake, 7 and Chelsea, 10, three bouncing, rousing bundles of energy just looking for the next thing to do. We figured that if we could impress these three children, we'd really have accomplished something.

We invited Dennis Hanson and his family to spend two weeks in northern Utah. These are his impressions:



The detailed restoration of the Capitol Theater is a monument to Utah's commitment to the performing arts.

The Hanson family takes time out at historic Temple Square near the headquarters of the Mormon Church. With Dennis and Bo are their children, Brendan (left), Chelsea and Blake.

This real vacation to northeast Utah began not exactly under duress, but with a good deal of reluctant foot-dragging.

Item #1. We rarely take extended family vacations.

As Robert Benchley observed, there are two ways to vacation: first-class and with children. By land, we are usually a station wagon chock-full of baggage, parental short temper and unquenchable sibling energy. The thought of us trying to bring all the right factors to bear within a two-week span of perfect weather has always seemed overwhelming. And even if we could pull it off, could we enjoy it?

Item #2. Why Utah?

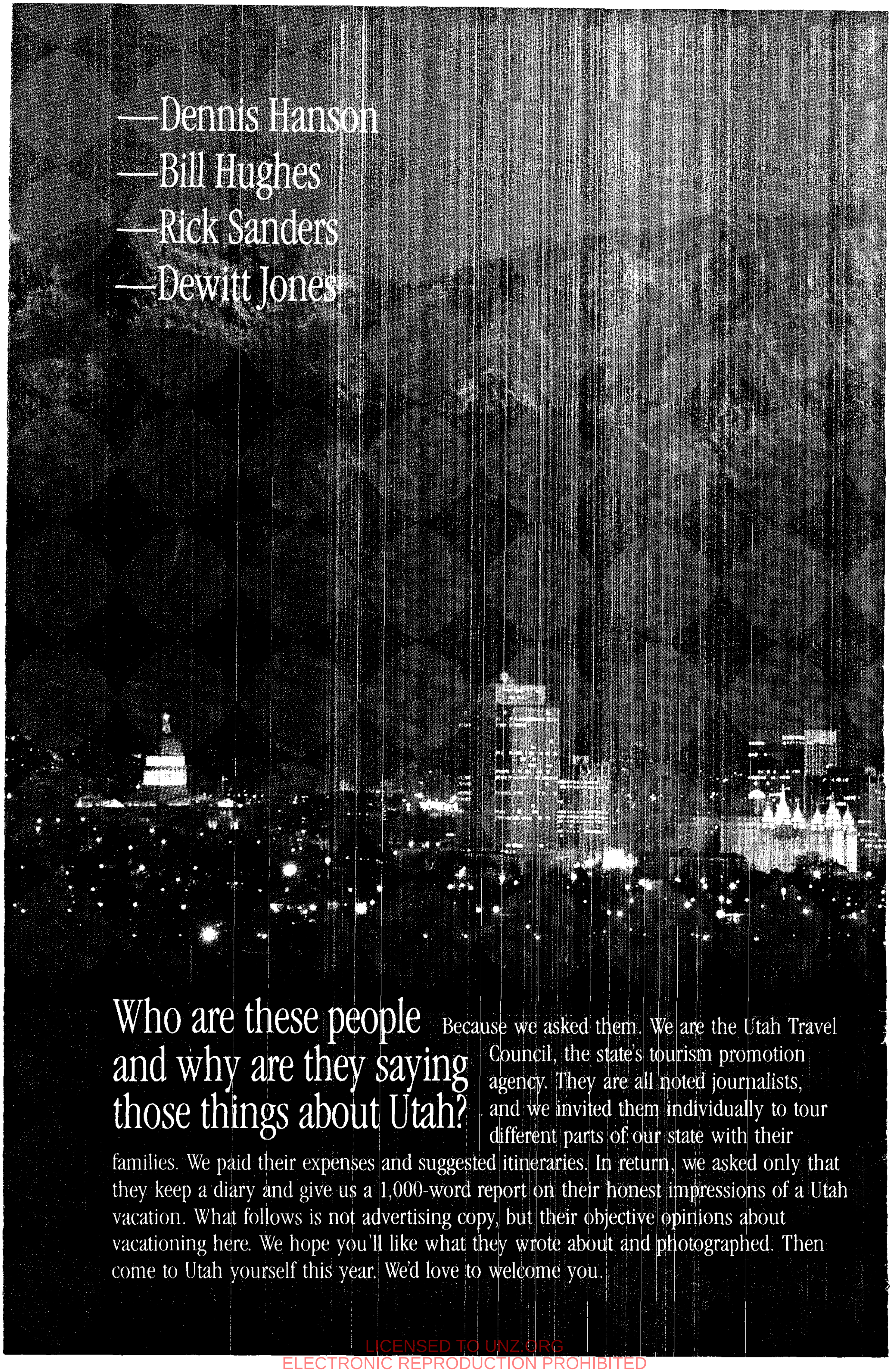
We live in central Oregon, like Utah, a vision of the big West — deserts, mountains, rivers, and recreational opportunities. Why not stay near home and take a few three-day weekends here and there?

Thus, when the invitation came from the Utah State Travel Council to experience northeast Utah, family in tow, I balked. I continued to resist until the answers to the above surfaced, as they began to in Salt Lake City.

Notes from my journal:

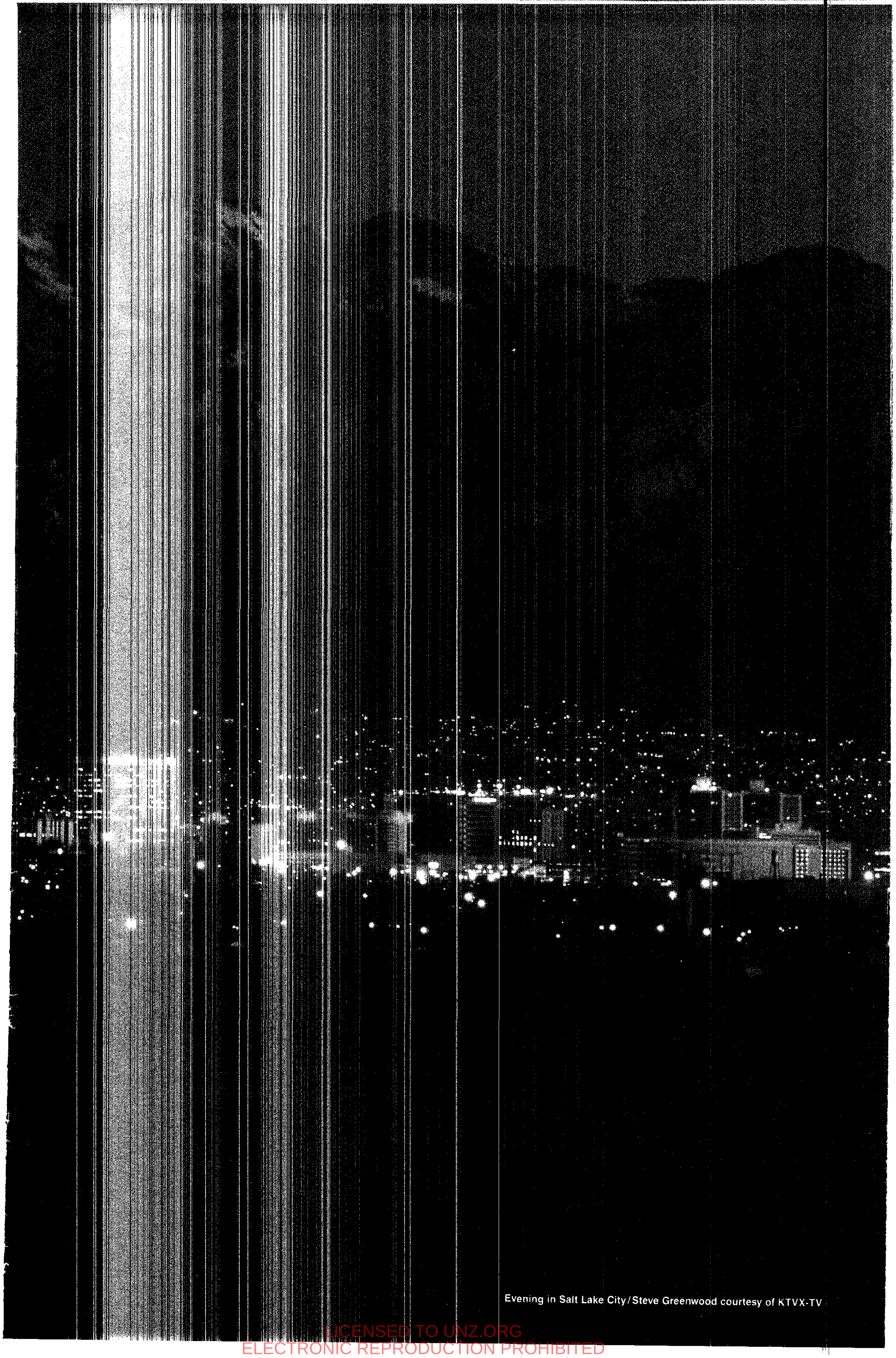
Taxi to plane and back to taxi, trip to Salt Lake astonishingly easy. Air terminal escalators still more inviting than any carnival ride, but minimum of fuss and chaos. City less austere, more with-it and liveable than I remember. Kids are restless but good natured, anxious to see what's in store.

The city has changed. It is not the ascetic gas-stop I recall while criss-crossing Utah on my way back from the east coast. For two days we explored and

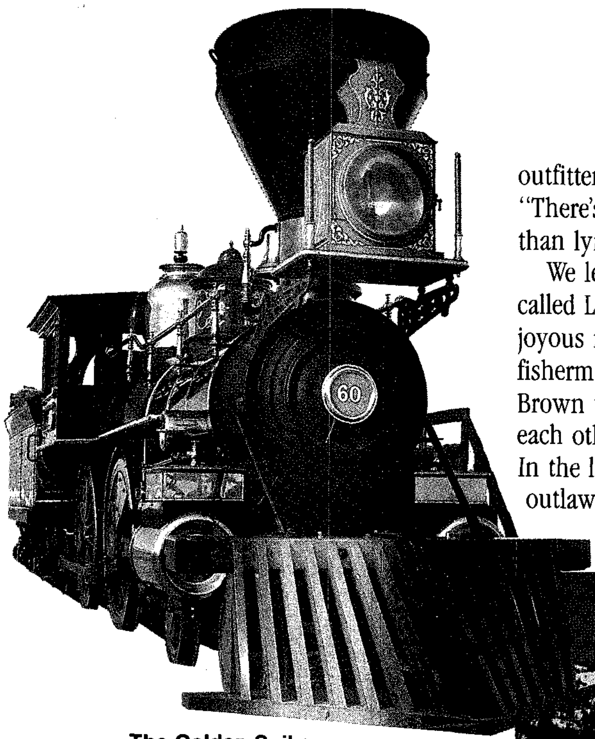
—Dennis Hanson
—Bill Hughes
—Rick Sanders
—Dewitt Jones

Who are these people and why are they saying those things about Utah?

Because we asked them. We are the Utah Travel Council, the state's tourism promotion agency. They are all noted journalists, and we invited them individually to tour different parts of our state with their families. We paid their expenses and suggested itineraries. In return, we asked only that they keep a diary and give us a 1,000-word report on their honest impressions of a Utah vacation. What follows is not advertising copy, but their objective opinions about vacationing here. We hope you'll like what they wrote about and photographed. Then come to Utah yourself this year. We'd love to welcome you.



Evening in Salt Lake City / Steve Greenwood courtesy of KTVX-TV



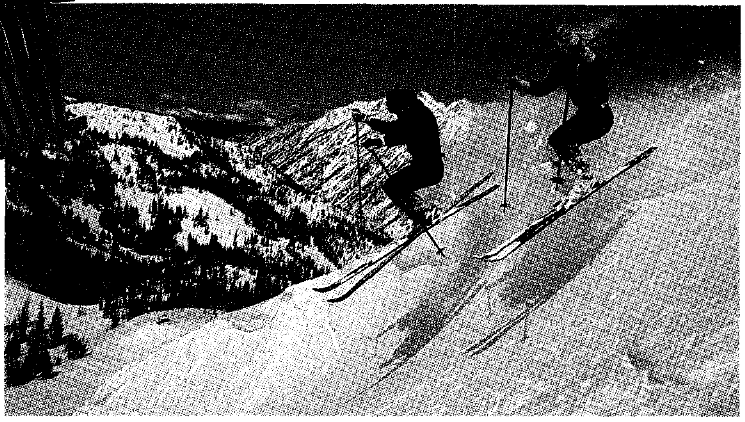
The Golden Spike National Historic Site celebrates the joining of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit near Ogden.

through numerous drenching rapids. Five-year-old *and* 35-year-old couldn't have had a better time. Between whitewater stretches, we together watched the magnificent redrock roll by.

The Green River country is an exposed, heat-deviled land that has seen drastic and violent natural action. Chelsea imagined that a tremendous waterhose had been turned against the fragile surface, forming immense canyons and tall, multi-hued cliffs. It is a dream for both field geologists and river-runners of all ages. "Stand-up country" one outfitter called the river canyons. "There's more of it standing up than lying down."

Perfect sailplane conditions in the Heber Valley.

We left the river at a bend called Little Hole where dozens of joyous rafters and weekend fishermen, some with huge Brown trout, were feasting in each other's company and tales. In the late 1800's, it was an outlaw hideout for Butch Cassidy and other Hole in the Wall cronies. It had been a marvelous Utah day of sun and sky and fun that ended at a place with a certain nostalgia.



The Greatest Snow on Earth — A morning flight from either coast puts you on the slopes that afternoon. Eleven major ski resorts are within an easy hour's drive from Salt Lake City International Airport.

For me, there was also a certain nostalgia at Bear Lake, a day beyond Vernal near the Idaho border. I have been fascinated since childhood with the American mountain man mystique. At Bear Lake, indeed on the very beach where we stayed, several boisterous trapper rendezvous had been staged. Today, the summer rendezvous of visitors would boggle the imagination of those old pathfinders. From skis to parasails, the 20-mile-long lake is a water recreationist's dream.

Example:

At one point, Blake and I looked up from the canvas of our Hobie Cat to see Chelsea 200 feet in the air on a parasail. Brendy's digging shells, Bo's reserving a ski boat, and all getting burned. Told the concessionaire that "I hadn't had this much fun since I was a kid." But I can't remember having had this much fun as a kid.

Toward the end of that long full day at Bear Lake, Blake, Chelsea, and I sat quietly on the sandy beach and talked of vacation time running out on us. Our return home was imminent. We watched Bo and Brendan offshore, giggling and splashing each other.

To the east, the dropping sun muted the golden aspen leaves on the distant hills and softened the hard blue colors bouncing off the water.

Blake touched his hand to my shoulder as if gently brushing off some sand, an odd familial gesture for an adolescent concerned with "looking cool." His silent comment telegraphed the feelings we all shared.

We arrived here as distraught tourists, but we left feeling both among ourselves and toward Utah, like family. To keep everyone happy day to day, there was a promise of some El Dorado at journey's end. Even if no one ever reaches the real El Dorado, I think we've come fairly close this time.

— Dennis Hanson

(Dennis Hanson, continued.)

For the next several days, we wandered through northeast Utah with just enough of an itinerary to orient the kids, but flexible enough to improvise on the spot — a whimsical hike, sailplane flight, hot-air balloon ride, concert, or adrenalin-charged drop down the spiral track of an alpine slide.

At Timpanogos Cave National Monument, we zig-zagged up the paved trail to the entrance of the half-mile long fairyland of stalagmites and helictites. Surrounded by this eerie fairyland, the three children let their imaginations roam over the pastel rock gallery with its weird, delicately shaped patterns.

"There's a seal! See it!"

"No. But there's a chocolate fountain! And a camel!"

The Hanson family at Timpanogos Cave National Monument. Just over the hill (below, right), the Hansons stop for a snapshot on Main Street in old town Park City.

An hour later, all of us exited into the sunshine happy and fascinated with our personal discoveries.

Moving on. Fewer tussles in the back seat. Less demand to be *there* — an increasing desire from all to allow Utah to roll along outside as each of us claims personal ownership of bits and pieces of this country.

Autumn colors just turning and immensity of 12,000-foot Mount Timpanogos gloriously climbing into the sky, just as I remember it as Robert Redford's backdrop in "Jeremiah Johnson." Numerous stops: hike at Sundance, airy 45-degree tram ride over Bridal Veil Falls, rocky ride for 20 miles on the yesteryear rails of the steam-driven "Heber Creeper," green-velour hills set amidst the pastured meadows of Heber.

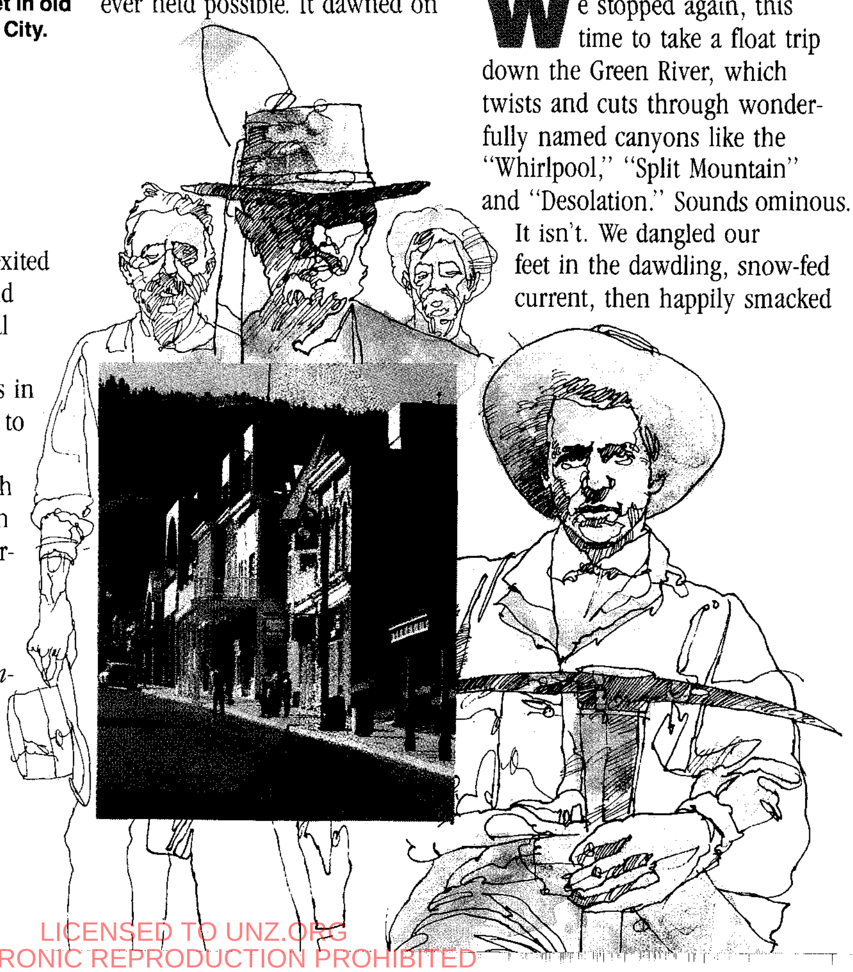
At Vernal, we roamed the Dinosaur Gardens and Museum, considered one of the world's finest such exhibits. There and at Dinosaur National Monument, 20 miles away, we stepped back 170 million years in time. Brendan is our resident family dinosaur expert. He actually knows a diplodocus from a pleiosaurus. What's more, he *cares*!

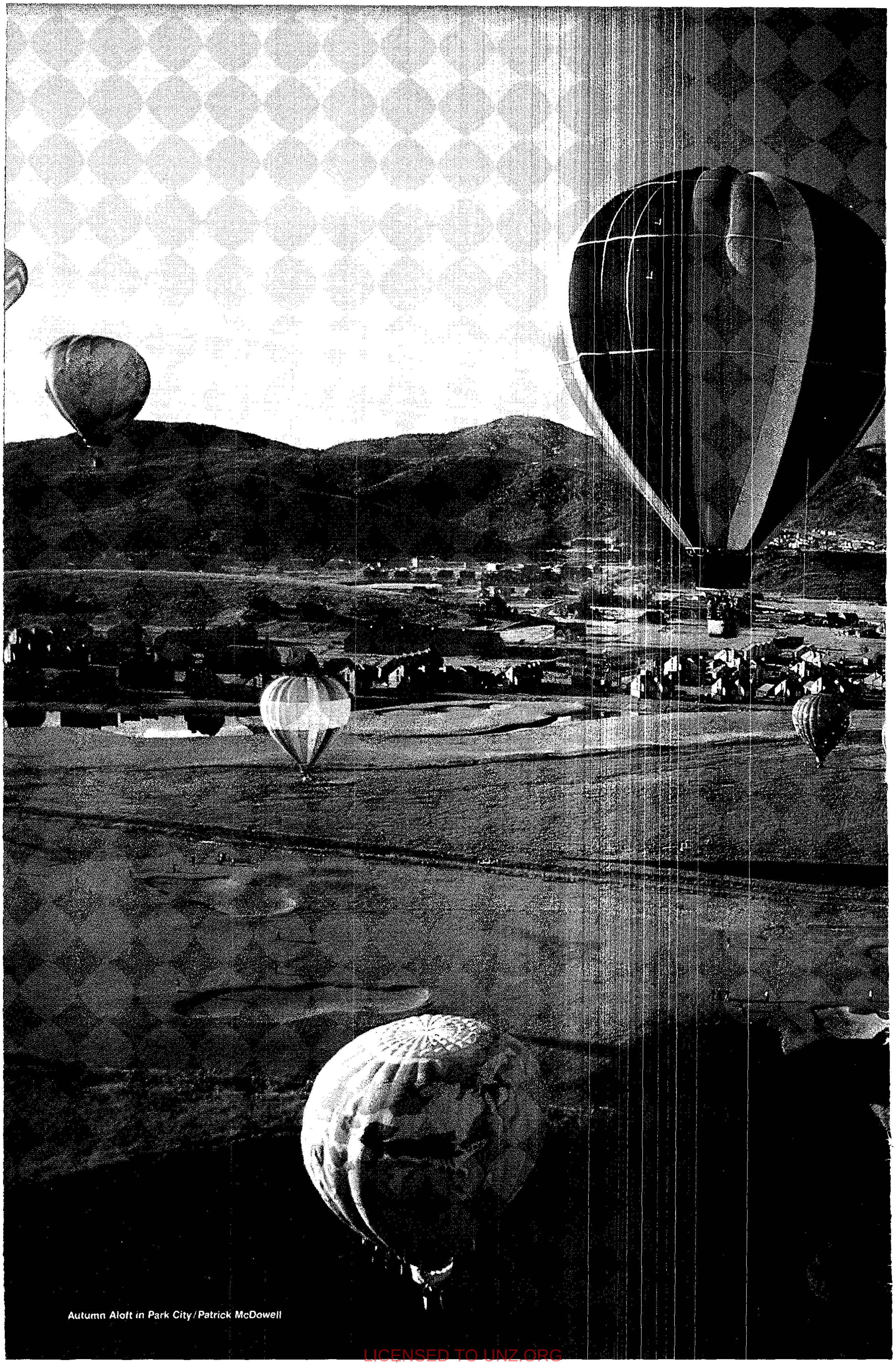
The chronicle of the distant past gripped all five of us. We quietly viewed the half-exposed skeletal remains — leg bones as big as a man, ribs like longbows. The experience was entrancing, far more than even Brendan had ever held possible. It dawned on all of us that the real wonder wasn't in the creatures' size and strangeness, but in the story they told — a tale of fantastic landscapes, staggering forces, and unimaginable stretches of time.

Step back 170 million years at Dinosaur National Monument near Vernal where rangers explain the delicate work of uncovering giant fossils.

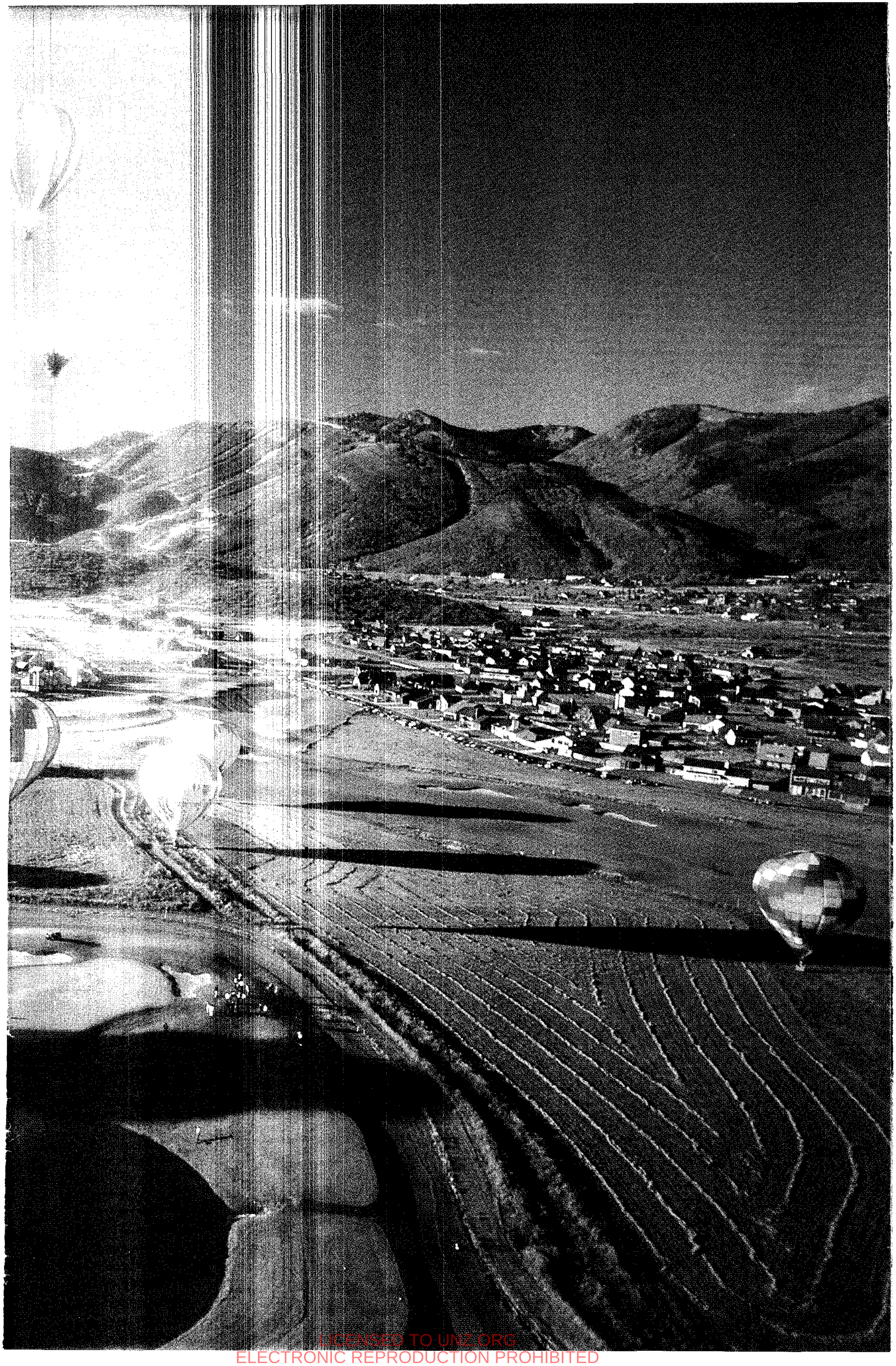
Increasing closeness we feel is reinforced by the gracious atmosphere here, where the family is considered nearly a shrine. Across the room at the restaurant in the Heber Valley, Chelsea shouted "Mom!", trying to get Bo's attention. Three-fourths of the women in the room responded.

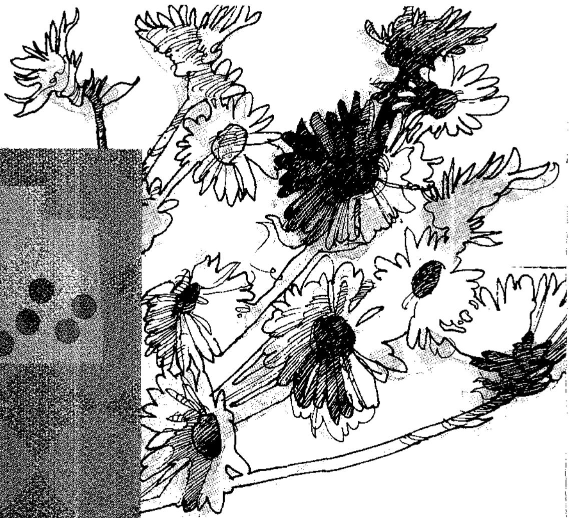
We stopped again, this time to take a float trip down the Green River, which twists and cuts through wonderfully named canyons like the "Whirlpool," "Split Mountain" and "Desolation." Sounds ominous. It isn't. We dangled our feet in the dawdling, snow-fed current, then happily smacked





Autumn Aloft in Park City / Patrick McDowell





"At Bryce, if you'll excuse the pun, you are seeing the effect of an endless sedimental journey."

Within Utah's borders are five National Parks — no state has more. Imagine, for a moment, trying to visit five of these scenic treasures in a single vacation. Sound strenuous?

Well then, add side trips to ancient monuments, winding rivers and colorful canyons. Watch the sun rise from vista views... pick wild flowers on canyon rims... and see rock formations millions of years old. Now do all that in two weeks.

Could it be done? We asked the opinion of **Bill Hughes**, a 25-year veteran travel writer who has logged more than 2 million miles through some of the most exotic travel spots in the world. Bill writes a column called "Mature Travel" for the *Los Angeles Times* which makes him an "almost senior citizen." He and his wife were apprehensive about the scope of our invitation. But after setting off through southern Utah in a motorhome, here's what they found...

Bill and Betty Hughes get acquainted with Zion National Park (above); autumn color envelopes a trail on the Aquarius Plateau (below) along the road between Bryce Canyon National Park and Capitol Reef National Park.

Way back in college when I managed a B+ in Geology 101, I learned all the ways this planet earth had been warped, crunched, cracked open, thrust up and worn down in a hundred ways during the process we call creation.

I just never expected to see all the evidence of this in one place: southern Utah. It's a tumultuous land God created (with, perhaps, some extra special-effects help from Moses.) I don't think He ever imagined Utah would be one of the world's top tourist attractions.

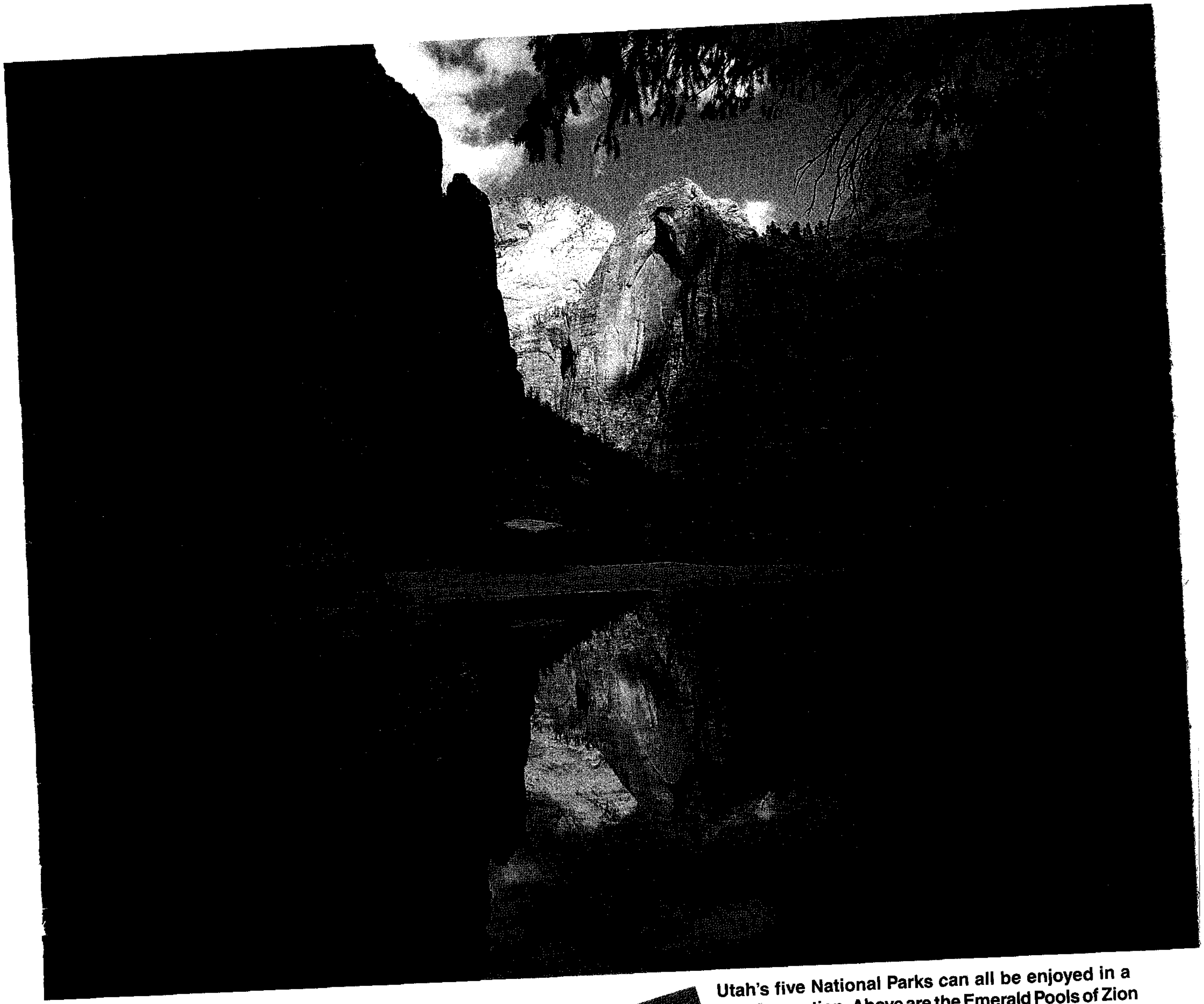
That's what it has become. There are five superb National Parks, and that's just for openers. There are plenty more National Monuments, Recreation Areas, state parks and wilderness areas... to say nothing of 10,001 lesser-known sites and sights that warm the hearts of the makers of Kodak and Fuji film.

In 40 years of travel, I'd only seen bits and pieces of all this. But this time my wife and I rented a motorhome and set aside two weeks to see nothing but the wonders of southern Utah. We were apprehensive. Had we waited too long? Were our semi-senior legs up to what seemed to be a hardy, adventurous trip?

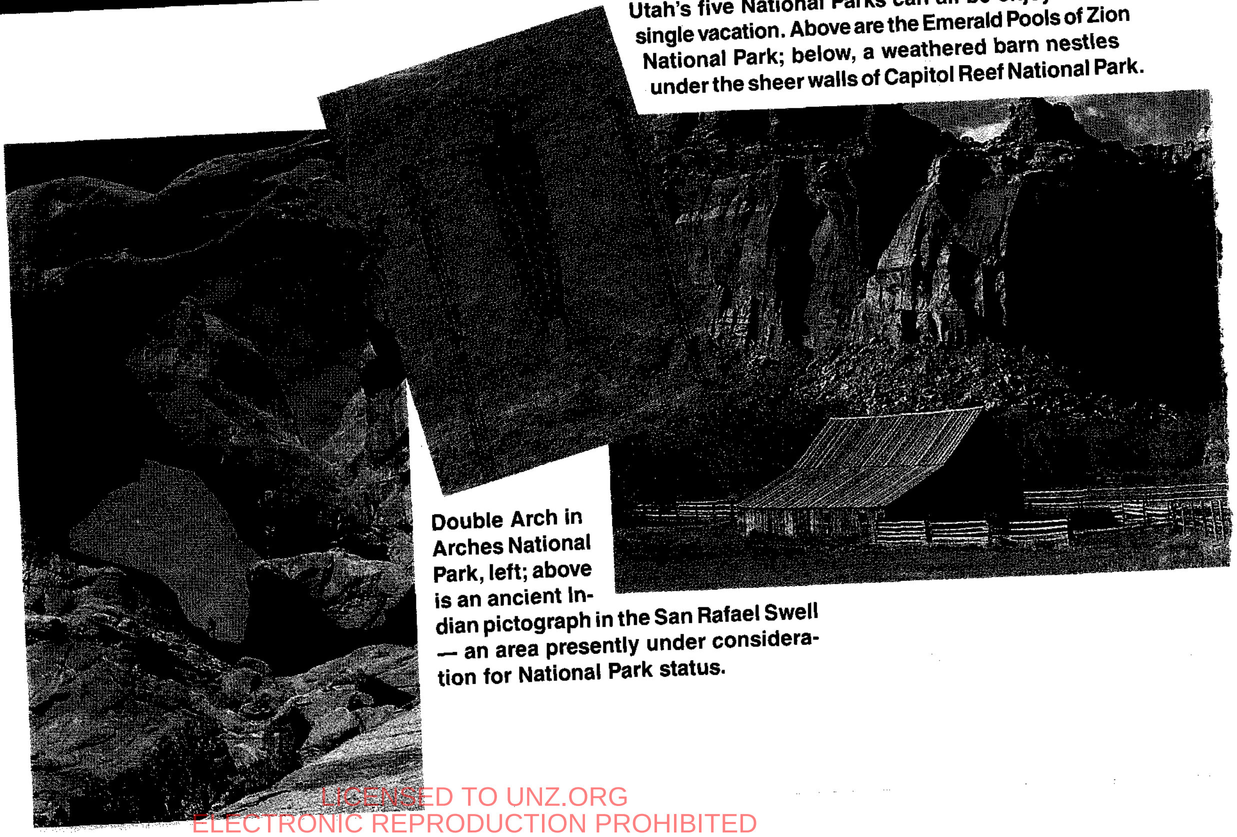
No problem, we found. Utah is a mature land for a mature people. I heard one elderly tourist say on his way out of a park ranger's trailside talk on the various ages of rock strata within Zion... "It's nice to see something 7,999,936 years older than me still standing."

Southern Utah unfolds its splendors slowly, dramatically, through a circular route over fine highways that link the five National Parks... Zion, Bryce Canyon, Capitol Reef, Canyonlands and Arches. Each is only a few hour's drive apart in succession... just enough time to digest what you've seen before starting another scenic feast. While we chose motorhome travel, it's certainly not necessary. All along the route to and through the Parks are fine accommodations.

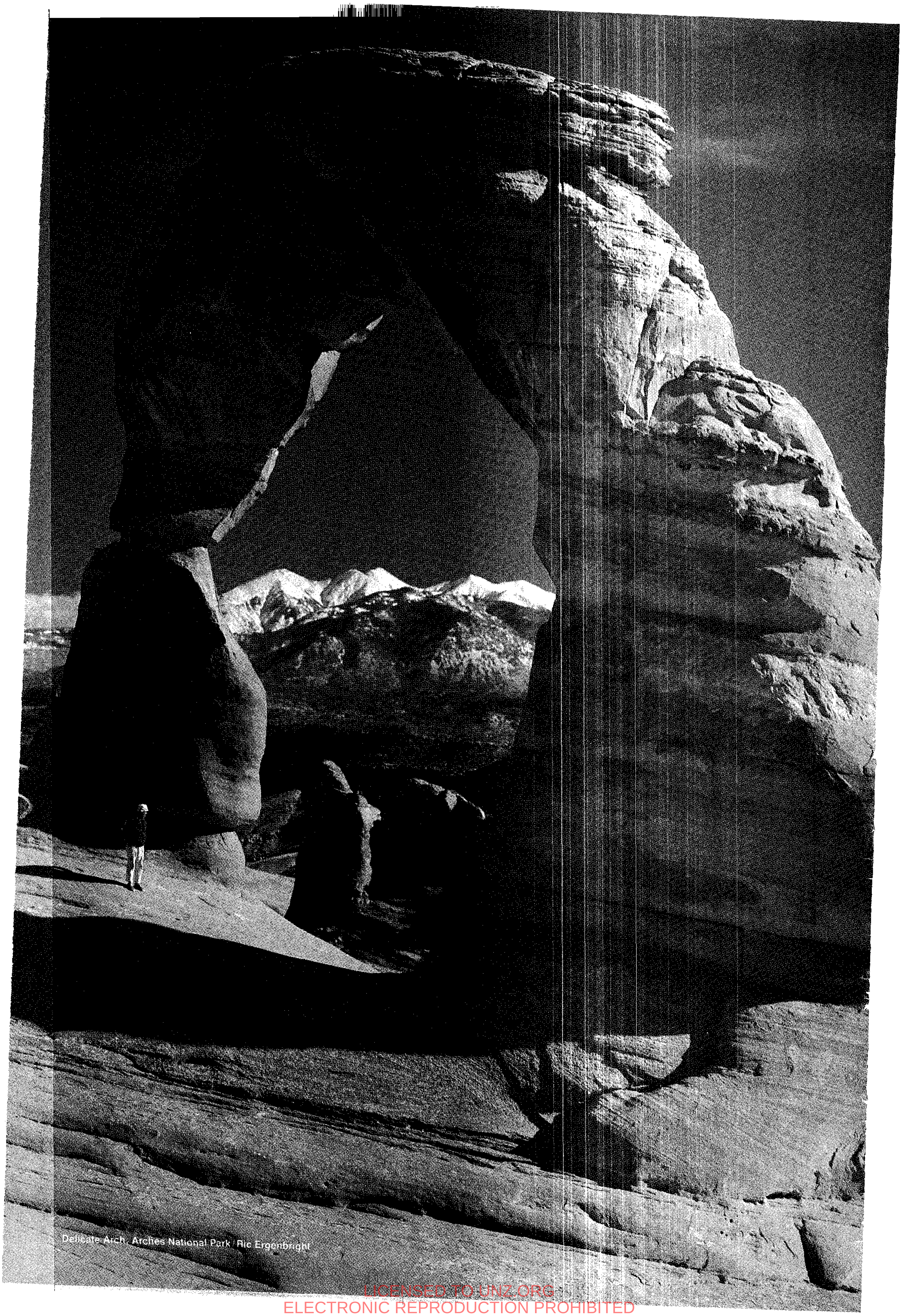
Driving through Zion under such monolithic monsters as the Great White Throne or Cable Mountain on either side, it's hard to equate them



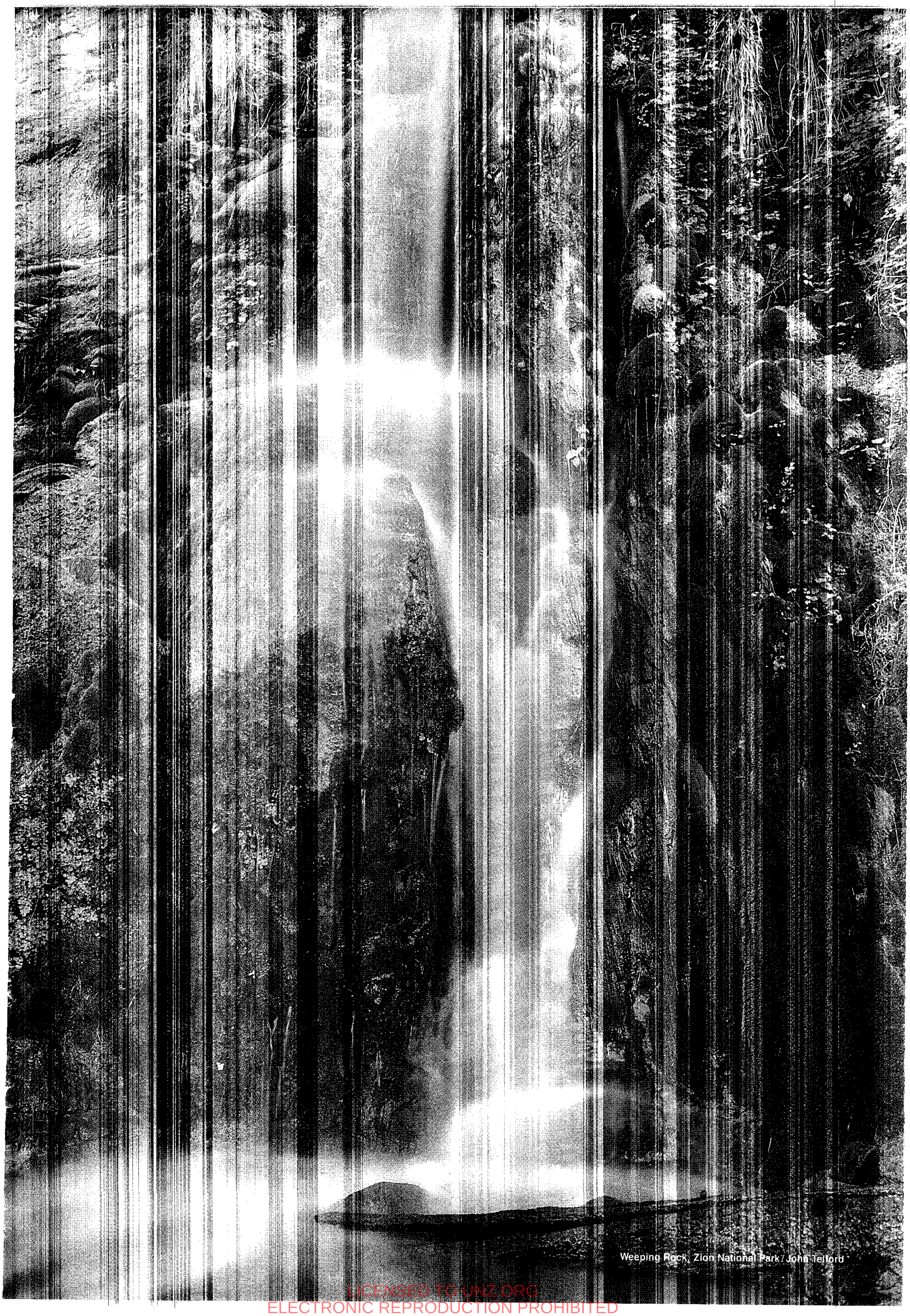
Utah's five National Parks can all be enjoyed in a single vacation. Above are the Emerald Pools of Zion National Park; below, a weathered barn nestles under the sheer walls of Capitol Reef National Park.



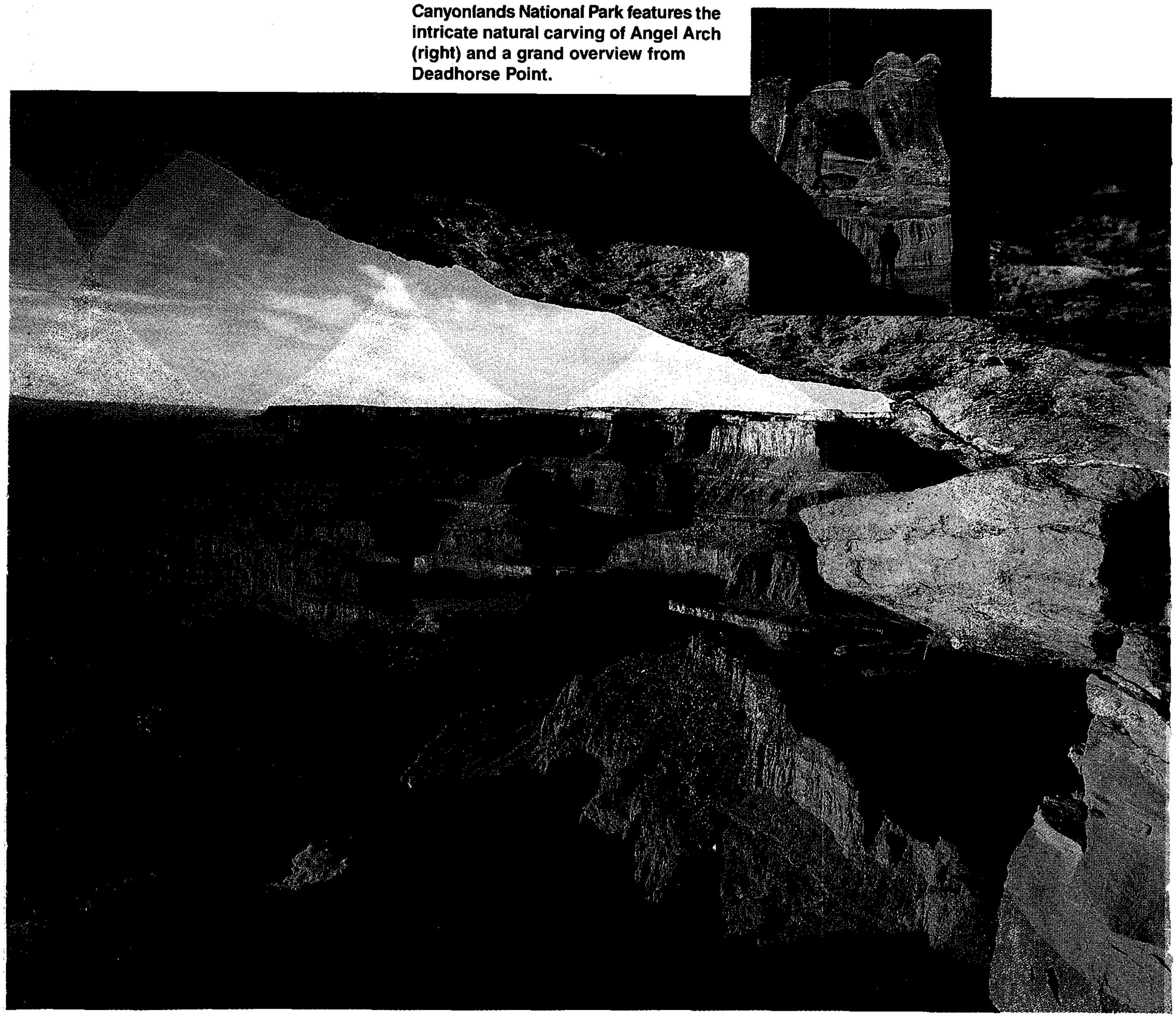
Double Arch in Arches National Park, left; above is an ancient Indian pictograph in the San Rafael Swell — an area presently under consideration for National Park status.



Delicate Arch, Arches National Park / Ric Ergenbright



Weeping Rock, Zion National Park / John Telford



Canyonlands National Park features the intricate natural carving of Angel Arch (right) and a grand overview from Deadhorse Point.

Don't make the same error other trip-planners do: being led into the belief that the five National Parks are all there is. We knew better. . . and thought we'd prepared by leaving plenty of option time. But even *we* fell short.

Though the five National Parks provide a full-house of aces, there is so much more to see. Take Dead Horse Point State Park, near Moab, with a combination campsite and breathtaking overview of Canyonlands. Or Goblin Valley, which more than lives up to its name. Or the Goosenecks of the San Juan, where six miles of river compress into three gigantic loops to traverse only one linear mile.

Not to be missed is Monument Valley in the Navajo Indian Reservation. Its majestic scenery has been captured in many a Hollywood film and most every towering pinnacle seems to have been capped at one time by a new car, truck or bunch of dogs for one eye-popping commercial or another.

Still other spots we all-too-briefly enjoyed and put down as return 'musts' include Escalante Canyon, Coral Pink Sand Dunes (scene of many a Hollywood Arabian epic), majestic Rainbow Bridge just off Lake Powell, Kodachrome Basin, and the ancient Indian ruins of Hovenweep.

Then there's Mexican Hat, Labyrinth Canyon, Valley of the Gods, The Maze, the newly accessible Aquarius Plateau . . . well, suffice to say, our two weeks were so unforgettable, it won't take another 30 years to get us back. My wife bought me a new book on field geology. . . and two for herself on wildflowers. She already has a date next spring with a Cliff Rose in Zion and an Evening Primrose at Bryce. But that's my wife. That's Utah. We'll be back.

— Bill Hughes

The Utah Shakespearean Festival in Cedar City has performed for 25 years, drawing thousands during its 2-month summer run.

Zion Narrows [illegible] Park.

with the meander[illegible] River trickling along [illegible] pipsqueak little Virgin [illegible] rambunctious in her youth (and pretty wild today on occasion) that scoured out the mammoth canyon you see.

Like most of Utah's Parks, a great deal of the beauty and drama can be seen right from your car, thanks to remarkable road engineering that links the top attractions without distracting from the grandeur of the Park. And in all Parks, a series of easy to difficult trails (so marked in guidebooks and maps) allow you to stretch your legs. . . and your imagination.

Looking at a map, Zion and Bryce appear so close you fear a sameness in the landscape. Nothing could be further from the mark. Zion is massive, soaring; Bryce is delicate, ethereal. The approach to Bryce is both dramatic and deceptive. First Route 12 wends through colorful Red Canyon. . . then on into the Park and groves of towering Ponderosa pine until the earth suddenly drops off into a weird landscape. . . at first almost grotesque, but soon changing to enchanting.

We spent hours here; me studying the rock strata, fault lines and other geological oddities, trying to educate my wife on erosive qualities of sandstone and limestone. But she preferred to spend her time picking out formations that looked like a castle, a camel, a sitting gopher or her Uncle Stanley. . . the fat one with the funny hat.

She also goofed up reading the map and directed us to Sunrise Point to watch the sun set. It was still spectacular. But that's my wife. That's Utah.

Unlike Bryce, you can see Capitol Reef National Park looming up on you all the time. Giant cliffs and towering rock battlements close in and evoke a feeling of travel amidst a lunar landscape. . . only you escape into an oasis called Fruita, an early Mormon fruit-growing community turned National Park campground.

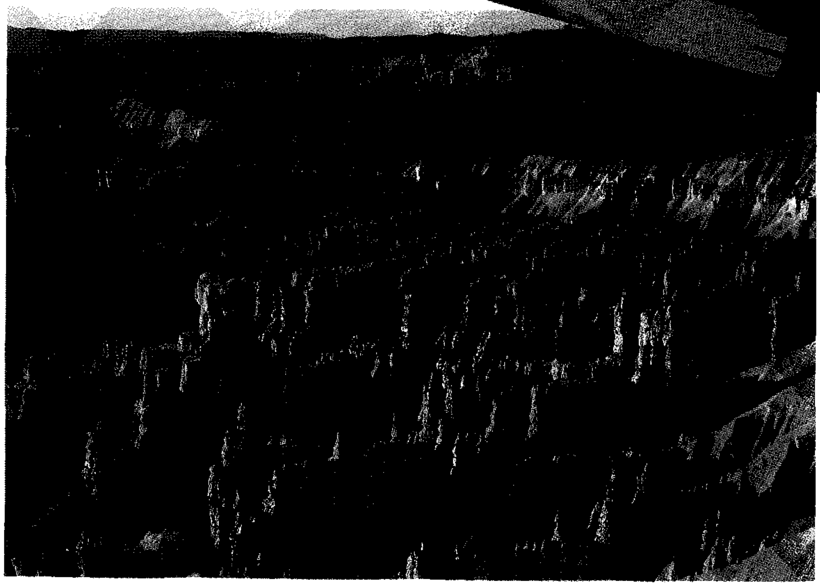
Unless you have a grasp of geology and such things as reefs, domes and anticlines (vastly different from Uncle Stanley, I told my wife) you won't comprehend the enormity of Capitol Reef. That doesn't necessarily have to limit your impressions of grandeur. If you don't mind some gentle hikes, or if you're a 4-wheeling buff, this 270,000-acre park opens up to views of overwhelming majesty.

Arches National Park is next on the Utah agenda of splendor and if you didn't understand the primeval forces that created Capitol Reef, you'll never believe what created Arches.

Imagine being told that one solid mile of sandstone stood over your head only to be eroded away to leave the 90 some arches, and assorted other odd shapes, cliffs, spires and balanced rocks. Mind-boggling stuff. It's like Michelangelo is supposed to have said about carving his masterpiece, David. . . "just cut away everything that doesn't look right."

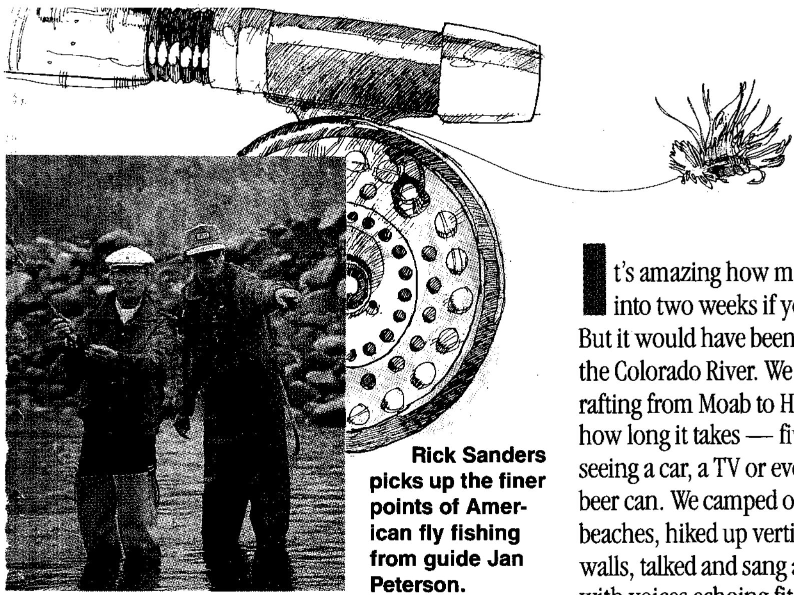
Within Arches, the 18-mile park road provides easy access — and views — of many of the arches. But that's just the hors d'oeuvres. The most dramatic and enchanting areas are best seen from one or more of the park's seven trails.

Canyonlands is Utah's newest National Park and it takes some seeking out, as only two access routes suitable for family car or RV lead into the vast 337,570 acres of canyon country. Easiest is that into the plateau area called Islands in the Sky, which provides vistas rivaling any in the world. Fine camping too. Excellent hiking and even better four-wheeling can be found at the southern entrance to the park which leads to The Needles section.



Bill and Betty Hughes stroll in front of rustic Bryce Canyon Lodge just a few steps away from the breathtaking overlook of Bryce Canyon National Park.

Lake Powell / Frank Jensen



Rick Sanders picks up the finer points of American fly fishing from guide Jan Peterson.

pect of two days' unmitigated hedonism at the Stein Eriksen Lodge at Deer Valley — two days of sauna, massage, big food and wine, telephones on every flat surface, the mountain retreat supreme.

Deer Valley, as we would discover, is a blueblood mountain mecca just up the road from Park City, the genuine Old Western Mining Queen turned winter/summer resort. A deep, warm massage and a blow-out meal soothed the spirit. A proper preparation — again, as we would discover — for the adventure awaiting us in southern Utah.

Good old Susie fell asleep on the Beechcraft from Salt Lake to Moab, hit by sensory overload, thereby missing one of the world's great flights. Snowcapped peaks and forests at the wingtip one minute, then, suddenly, nothing but redrock desert — layer after layer of it, a strange and intricately devastated landscape, a living lesson in geography and time.

Then we came down to earth and *into* the landscape; a real heart-stopper, with Bob Jones, local tour operator and a man with a Land Cruiser. We went to Arches National Park and Dead Horse Point on paved roads, and were awestruck — these massive primal places of rock, air, erosion, sagebrush and lizards, utterly unique. And then Bob went off the road, to canyon rim and down into Canyonlands.

Faster! More bumps! urged Susie with unholy glee as we roared and whined from boulder to boulder. You're not going to drive down *that?* asked Deidre at Elephant Hill, aghast. Of course, he did.

It's amazing how much you can fit into two weeks if you try, in Utah. But it would have been a shame to rush the Colorado River. We had five days, rafting from Moab to Hite, and that's how long it takes — five days without seeing a car, a TV or even a discarded beer can. We camped on pristine beaches, hiked up vertiginous canyon walls, talked and sang around campfires with voices echoing fit to make your hair stand on end, and bighorn sheep coming almost close enough to touch.

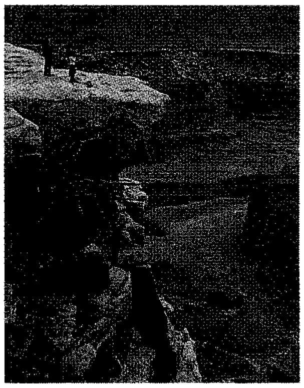
And we got wet. At Moab, the river is slow, wide and brown. But as you gently wind deeper into the canyons, it continually, imperceptibly, picks up speed. By Cataract Canyon, three days out from Moab, it has become a torrent of rocks, holes and white water. And down you go.

For hour after hour we were plunging at impossible angles, drenched, screaming with delight and roaring along with the water in an orgy of exhilaration and release. A prayer for our three oarsmen — although they assured us it was unneccessary. They got us through — three raftloads of us (banker, hairdresser, construction worker, playwright, housewife, etc., etc.). By the end of the trip we realized just how tightly-knit a party we had become.

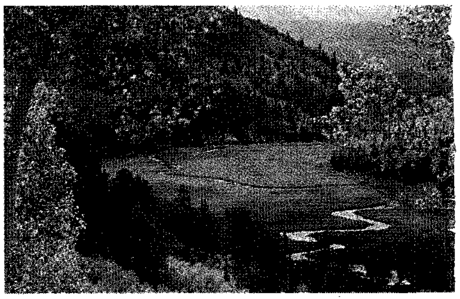
Deidre, Susie and Rick Sanders on the trail during their guided pack trip into the High Uintas Primitive Area.

It was truly painful to say our goodbyes and re-enter civilization after such a peak experience. We retraced our river odyssey in half an hour with a scenic flight, and took it easy houseboating for a day on Lake Powell. This vast, unearthly lake, formed by damming the Colorado, is pure technicolour, with deep green waters and sheets of red sandstone rising hundreds of feet into the sky.

There are nearly 1,800 miles of shoreline in this redrock fairyland. At each turn of the boat a new sandstone monument appears, a different water-canyon beckons. Majesty everywhere.



The Sanders at Deadhorse Point, overlooking Canyonlands National Park.



A pastoral valley in the Fishlake National Forest.

It seemed almost an instant, and we were over the Atlantic again. And as quickly, I come to the end of this short diary. I told the Utah people that part of my problem was that we genuinely had such a magnificent time that I felt obliged to praise. This may not make the best journalism, but the feeling is true. The sheer pleasure of being in Utah was so strong, we found nothing at all to arouse the more critical instincts. Apart from the damned car.

— Rick Sanders

"I had been Clint Eastwood, Montgomery Clift and Little Big Man for some time."

Utah is well known for its great outdoors. What isn't as well known is that Utah's rugged beauty can be enjoyed by practically everyone. Our international airport makes us extremely accessible, and our many guides, wranglers and tour companies can handle every detail of your adventure — from airline tickets to twilight campfires. To demonstrate this point we sought someone willing to experience Utah's back country first hand: a man capable of facing a challenge, a man willing to answer the call of the wild. Quickly **Rick Sanders** was our unanimous choice. You see, Mr. Sanders is a food and wine critic. Raised in England, Rick is a man of unquestionable refinement and dignified leisure. What's more, he prefers the gentle bouquet of a Cabernet Sauvignon to the more rousing attributes of even a Bronco. Thus, not exactly, but nevertheless, the ideal man for our assignment. We decided that if Mr. Sanders could come halfway round the world and enjoy our rugged adventures we'd have an apt demonstration that, indeed, Utah's Great Out of Doors is truly for everyone!

From the heart of rural England to the great American West in just one day is a mighty leap. My wife Deidre, nine-year-old Susie and myself had already been twenty-two hours without sleep by the time we looked down at the twinkling lights of Salt Lake City. We were wired-up, wide-eyed and wasted — actually no bad way to begin two weeks of Utah adventure. We were *ready.*

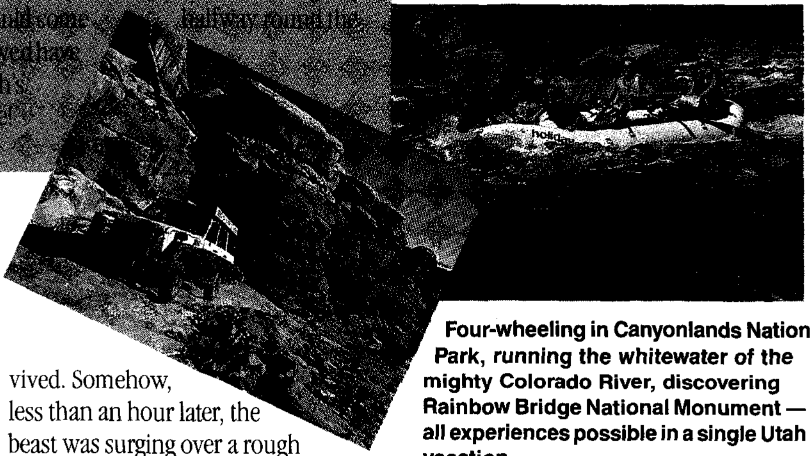
Our first expedition was to be an overnight horse ride, sleeping out. We'd made arrangements with an outfitter to join a commercial pack trip in the northern Utah mountains. Deidre and Susie, both horse-crazy, couldn't wait. But first I had to get them there — and found myself stuck behind the wheel of a great soft beast of a station wagon the size of a London bus. For someone used to small, nippy English cars, this was culture shock; this was fear. But we survived. Somehow, less than an hour later, the beast was surging over a rough track into the foothills of the High Uintas Wilderness Area — real country, the backwoods America of our myths.

And what colours — I've seen Vermont and the English Lake District, but never the expanse of autumn reds, yellows and greens we saw at Piute Creek Ranch. Simply incredible. Grinning like kids, we said hello to our fellow-riders, our horses, and Isabelle, our guide. Was that a real six-shooter at her hip? Oh, you never know when you might need it, she smiled.

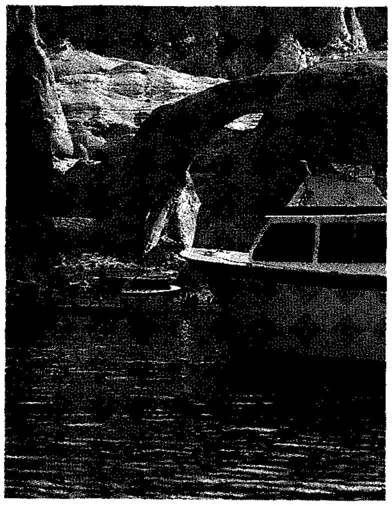
Respectfully we rode up into the hills, where no man had ridden before. Well, that's how it felt. By the time the first moose came into view — he just stood there, unperturbed — I had been Clint Eastwood, Montgomery Clift and Little Big Man for some time. Everything was so quiet. Unfamiliar birds darted from tree to tree. John, the photographer, saw an eagle.

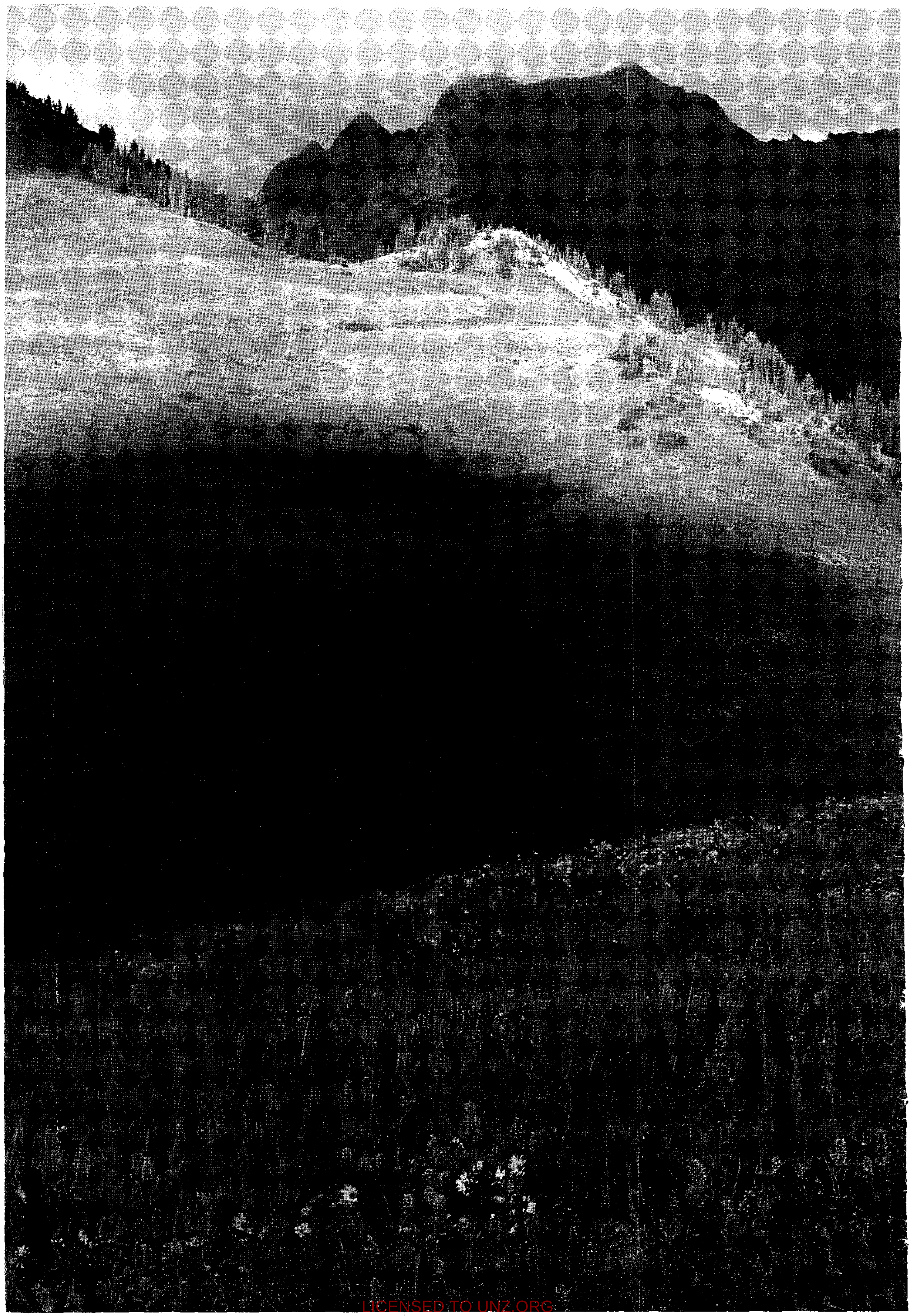
We camped by a small, silent lake; when we arrived, there were three moose at the edge, drinking. Llamas and packhorses were tethered, already a fire was blazing, already a portable bathroom with a view — and Jean Luc, a genuine imported Frenchman, was cooking. What finer meal for hungry horsemen than steak, courgettes and sourdough bread under the stars? Luxury! A fitting time to bring out my bottle of genuine imported French brandy; and we learned the frontier survival skill of roasting marshmallows.

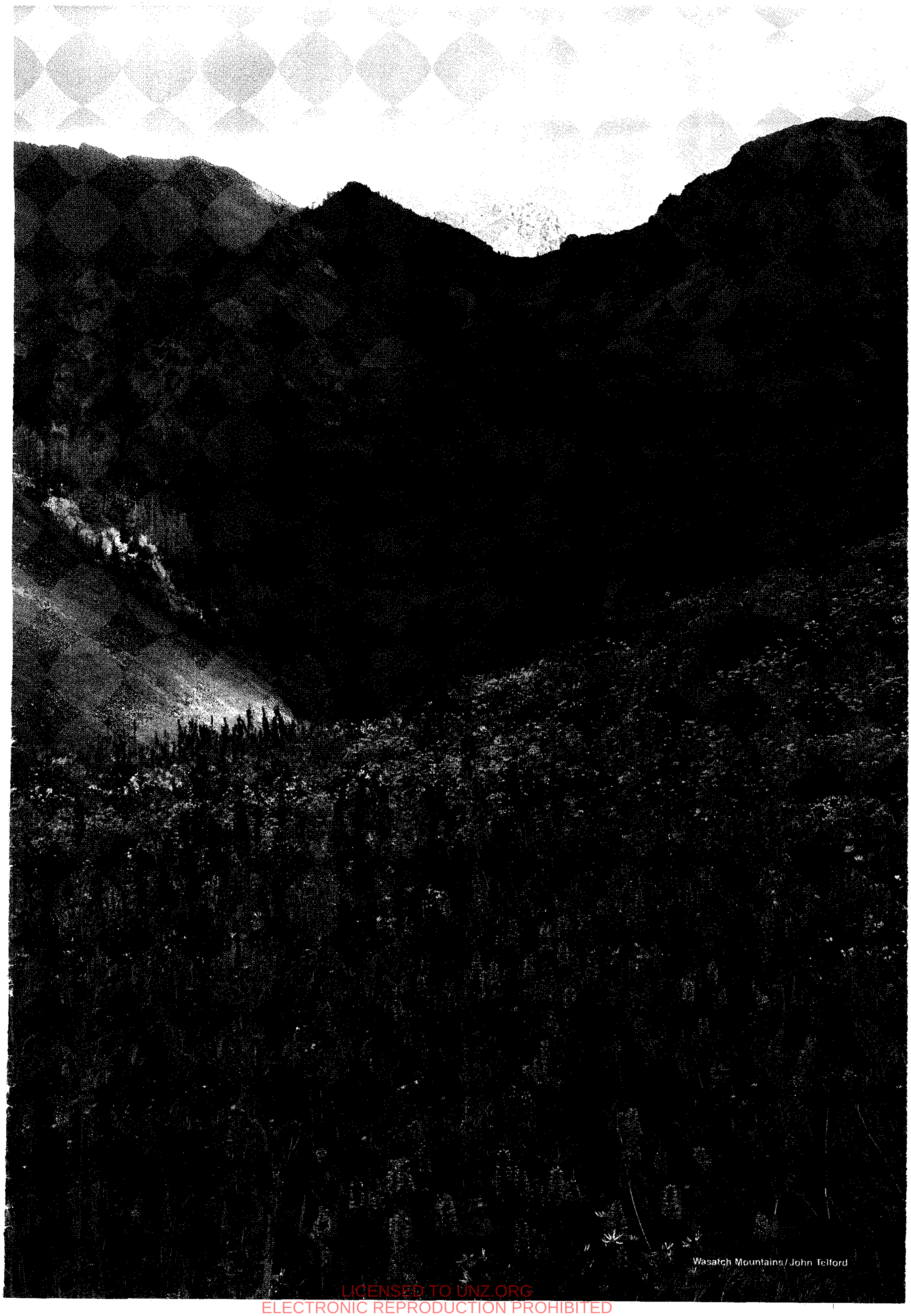
We woke up to rain, and it didn't stop. But that was no dismay with coffee, pancakes, a poncho and a warm horse. And we had the luxurious pros-



Four-wheeling in Canyonlands National Park, running the whitewater of the mighty Colorado River, discovering Rainbow Bridge National Monument — all experiences possible in a single Utah vacation.







Wasatch Mountains/John Telford

Bear Lake / June Krambule

Monument Valley / David Muench

Cataract Canyon on the Colorado River / John Telford

Rainbow Bridge National Monument / David Muench

Capitol Reef National Park / Dewitt Jones

"...of all the places..."

At nearly every bend in Utah highways and hiking trails, there is scenic material suitable for the next cover of *National Geographic Magazine*. Those of us who live here know that. But somehow our friends who haven't visited Utah have a hard time believing the claim. Most write it off as territorial boastfulness.

That's why we went to the source for verification. **Dewitt Jones** is a freelance photographer for *National Geographic*. He has traveled all over the world photographing this Earth's grand beauty. And what is his favorite subject? We asked Dewitt to submit his response in writing. Then we asked several other renowned photographers to submit their evidence in pictures. Here's what they said:

It's morning, but just barely morning. I lie, back flat against the skin of the earth, and feel the desert sweep out before me in all directions — open, empty, still and silent.

Then, before the sun breaks the horizon, I slip out of my sleeping bag, shoulder my cameras and head out. It will be another Utah sunrise, and I don't want to miss it.

It's been six years since I first came to Utah's canyon country. An assignment for *National Geographic* brought me initially to Zion National Park, beginning a love affair with Utah that continues to deepen.

I've explored a good part of the state since then — Zion, Bryce, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, Lake Powell, Arches, Monument Valley, as well as miles of country in between. With each visit, my impressions of the state's many wonders expand and intensify.

The Britisher Alistair Cooke was once asked to name ten places in North America that he felt were truly unique. Five of the first seven he chose were in the canyon country.

I heartily concur with Mr. Cooke. There are beautiful mountains and valleys and rivers and deserts all over the world — I know, I've photographed many of them. But there's nothing like Utah's canyon country — anywhere.

This magical confluence of sand and water and eons of time is a photographer's paradise. The lights, the shapes, the colors present limitless possibilities for my lenses; while at the same time, the geography of the region stretches my intellect and launches my imagination.

Utah's canyon country is upside down geography: occasionally mountains stick up, but more often canyons stick down. The walls of these canyons provide an open book of the Earth's history, exposing and recording almost two billion years of geologic time.

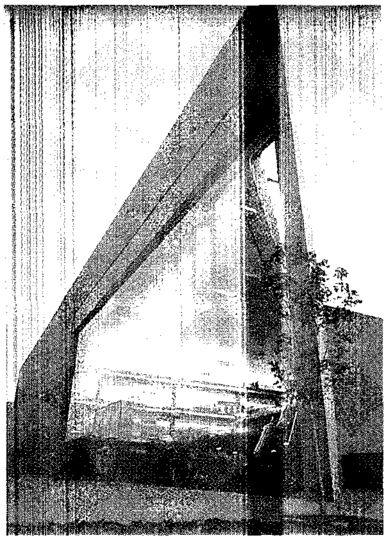
It's a big country, its vastness evoking a sense of eternity. Seeing it, I'm reminded of my place in the scheme of things, and reconnected to a sense of wonder and a sense of hope.

Yet despite all its grandeur, Utah's canyon country is remarkably accessible. Good towns and good people are an integral part of the landscape. Everywhere I've gone — from Salt Lake City to Vernal, from Moab to St. George — I've been well taken care of. Friendly people in a relaxed, informal lifestyle have always made me feel at home.

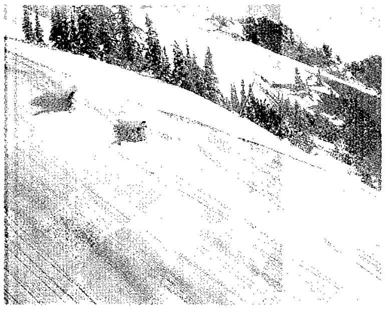
Unique beauty, spacious landscapes, accessibility and good people. The combination of these qualities is hard to find and hard to beat. I've found them all in Utah; it's why I keep coming back.

I've traveled all over the world in my life, and of all the places I've ever been, my favorite is Utah.

— Dewitt Jones



Symphony Hall/Grant [illegible]



The Greatest Snow on Earth/Bruce Aoki

Aquarius Plateau/Ric Ergenbright

Bridal Veil Falls/Steve Greenwood

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Specific Interests?

Perhaps there is a particular activity or area of the state in which you have an interest. Or maybe you have questions about hunting or fishing or skiing or regulations in our 44 State Parks. Listed below are a number of agencies which may be of help. Don't hesitate to contact any of them individually.

SALT LAKE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
180 South West Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 521-2822

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
125 South State, Room 3418
Salt Lake City, UT 84138
(801) 524-4165

UTAH DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION
1636 West North Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84116
(801) 533-6011

UTAH GUIDES AND OUTFITTERS
3031 South 500 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84106
(801) 466-1912

U.S. FOREST SERVICE
324 25th Street
Ogden, UT 84401
(801) 625-5182

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
324 South State
Salt Lake City, UT 84111-2303
(801) 524-5330

UTAH HOTEL MOTEL ASSOCIATION
#9 Exchange Place, Suite 715
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
(801) 359-0104

UTAH SKI ASSOCIATION
307 West 200 South, #5005
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 534-1779

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
4501 South 2700 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84119
(801) 965-4104

BRIDGERLAND
52 West 200 North
Logan, UT 84321
(801) 752-2161

CASTLE COUNTRY
P.O. Box 422
Price, UT 84501
(801) 637-2788

COLOR COUNTRY
P.O. Box 1550
237 North Bluff Street, #2
St. George, UT 84770
(801) 628-4171

DINOSAURLAND
Chamber of Commerce
120 East Main
Vernal, UT 84078
(801) 789-1352

GRAND COUNTY TRAVEL COUNCIL
P.O. Box 550
Moab, UT 84532
(801) 259-8825

GOLDEN SPIKE EMPIRE
P.O. Box 1601
Ogden, UT 84402
(801) 399-8288

MOUNTAINLAND
160 East Center
Provo, UT 84601
(801) 377-2262

PANORAMALAND
P.O. Box 788
Richfield, UT 84701
(801) 896-9222

SAN JUAN COUNTY TRAVEL COUNCIL
P.O. Box 490
Monticello, UT 84535
(801) 587-2231

PARK CITY CHAMBER/BUREAU
P.O. Box 1630
Park City, UT 84060
(801) 649-6100

WASHINGTON COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITOR BUREAU
97 East St. George Boulevard
St. George, UT 84770
(801) 628-0505

UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES
1596 West North Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84116
(801) 533-9333

UTAH GEOLOGICAL AND MINERAL SURVEY
606 Black Hawk Way
Salt Lake City, UT 84108
(801) 581-6831

AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION (AAA/UTAH)
560 East 500 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
(801) 364-5615

UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
300 Rio Grande
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 533-5755

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so many people in it, and so many soybeans, that its levees were to be breached only by explosives in extreme emergency—maybe once in a hundred years. The Morganza Floodway, completed in the nineteen-fifties, contained farmlands but no permanent buildings. A couple of towns and the odd refinery were surrounded by levees in the form of rings. But the plane geometry of the floodways was primarily intended to take the water from the Mississippi and get it to the swamp.

The flood-control design of 1928 had left Old River open—the only distributary of the Mississippi to continue in its natural state. The Army was aware of the threat from the Atchafalaya. Colonel Charles Potter, president of the Mississippi River Commission, told Congress in 1928 that the Mississippi was "just itching to go that way." In the new master plan, however, nothing resulted from his testimony. The Corps, in making its flow diagrams, planned that the Atchafalaya would take nearly half the Mississippi during the Design Flood. It was not in the design that the Atchafalaya take it all.

The Atchafalaya, continuing to grow, had become, by volume of discharge, the second-largest river in the United States. Compared with the Mississippi, it had a three-to-one advantage in slope. Around 1950, geologists predicted that by 1975 the shift would be unstoppable. The Mississippi River and Tributaries Project would be in large part invalidated, the entire levee system of southern Louisiana would have to be rebuilt, communities like Morgan City in the Atchafalaya Basin would be a good deal less preserved than Pompeii, and the new mouth of the Mississippi would be a hundred and twenty miles from the old. Old River Control was authorized in 1954.

The levees were raised again. What had been adequate in 1937 was problematical in the nineteen-fifties. New grades were set. New dollars were spent to meet the grades. So often compared with the Great Wall of China, the levees had more in common with the Maginot Line. Taken together, they were a retroactive redoubt, more than adequate to wage a bygone war but below the requirements of the war to come. The levee grades of the nineteen-fifties would prove inadequate in the nineteen-seventies. Every shopping center, every drainage improvement, every square foot of new pavement in nearly half the United States was accelerating runoff toward Louisiana. Streams were being channelized to drain swamps. Meanders were cut off to speed up flow. The valley's natural storage capacities were everywhere reduced. As contributing factors grew, the river delivered more flood for less rain. The precipitation that produced the great flood of 1973 was only about twenty per cent above normal. Yet the crest at St. Louis was the highest ever recorded there. The flood proved that control of the Mississippi was as much a hope for the future as control of the Mississippi had ever been. The 1973 high water did not come close to being a Project Flood. It merely came close to wiping out the project.

While the control structure at Old River was shaking, more than a third of the Mississippi was going down the Atchafalaya. If the structure had toppled, the flow would have risen to seventy per cent. It was enough to scare not only a Louisiana State University professor but the division commander himself. At the time, this was Major General Charles Noble. He walked the bridge, looked down into the exploding water, and later wrote these words: "The south training wall on the Mississippi River side of the structure failed very early in the flood, causing violent eddy patterns and extreme turbulence. The toppled training wall monoliths worsened the situation. The integrity of the structure at this point was greatly in doubt. It was frightening to stand above the gate bays and experience the punishing vibrations caused by the violently turbulent, massive flood waters."

If the General had known what was below him, he might have sounded retreat. The Old River Control Structure—this two-hundred-thousand-ton keystone of the comprehensive flood-protection project for the lower Mississippi Valley—was teetering on steel pilings above extensive cavities full of water. The gates of the Morganza Floodway, thirty miles downstream, had never been opened. The soybean farmers of Morganza were begging the Corps not to open them now. The Corps thought it over for a few days while the Old River Control Structure, absorbing shock of the sort that could bring down a skyscraper, continued to shake. Relieving some of the pressure, the Corps opened Morganza.

The damage at Old River was increased but not initiated by the 1973 flood. The invasive scouring of the channel bed and the undermining of the control structure may actually have begun in 1963, as soon as the structure opened. In years that followed, loose barges now and again slammed against the gates, stuck there for months, blocked the flow, enhanced the hydraulic jump, and no doubt contributed to the scouring. Scour holes formed on both sides of the control structure, and expanded steadily. If they had met in 1973, they might have brought the structure down.

After the waters quieted and the concrete had been penetrated by exploratory diamond drills, Old River Control at once became, and has since remained, the civil-works project of highest national priority for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Through the surface of Louisiana 15, the road that traverses the structure, more holes were drilled, with diameters the size of dinner plates, and grout was inserted in the cavities below, like fillings in a row of molars. The grout was cement and bentonite. The drilling and filling went on for months. There was no alternative to leaving gates open and giving up control. Stress on the structure was lowest with the gates open. Turbulence in the channel was commensurately higher. The greater turbulence allowed the water on the Atchafalaya side to dig deeper and increase its advantage over the Mississippi side. As the Corps has reported, "The percentage of Mississippi River flow being diverted through the structure in the absence of control was steadily increasing." That could not be helped.

After three and a half years, control was to some extent restored, but the extent was limited. In the words of the Corps, "The partial foundation undermining which occurred in 1973 inflicted permanent damage to the foundation of the low sill control structure. Emergency foundation repair, in the form of rock riprap and cement grout, was performed to safeguard the structure from a potential total failure. The foundation under approximately fifty per cent of the structure was drastically and irrevocably changed." The structure had been built to function with a maximum difference of thirty-seven feet between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya sides. That maximum now had to be lowered to twenty-two feet—a diminution that brought forth the humor in the phrase "Old River Control." Robert Fairless, a New Orleans District engineer who has long been a part of the Old River story, once told me that "things were touch and go for some months in 1973" and the situation was precarious still. "At a head greater than twenty-two feet, there's danger of losing the whole thing," he said. "If loose barges were to be pulled into the front of the structure where they would block the flow, the head would build up, and there'd be nothing we could do about it."

A sign appeared on one of the three remaining wing walls: "Fishing and Shad Dipping off This Wing Wall Is Prohibited."

A survey boat, Navy-gray and very powerful and much resembling PT-109, began to make runs toward the sill upstream through the roiling brown rapids. Year after year—at least five times a week—this has continued. The survey boat drives itself to a standstill in the whaleback waves a few yards shy of the structure. Two men in life vests, who stand on the swaying deck in spray that curls like smoke, let go a fifty-pound ball that drops on a cable from a big stainless reel. The ball sinks to the bottom. The crewmen note the depth. They are not looking for mark twain. For example, in 1974 they found three holes so deep that it took a hundred and eighty-five thousand tons of rock to fill them in.

The 1973 flood shook the control structure a whole lot more than it shook the confidence of the Corps. When a legislative committee seemed worried, a Corps general reassured them, saying, "The Corps of Engineers can make the Mississippi River go anywhere the Corps directs it to go." On display in division headquarters in Vicksburg is a large aerial photograph of a school bus moving along a dry road beside a levee while a Galilee on the other side laps at the levee crown. This picture alone is a triumph for the Corps. Herbert Kassner, the public-relations director and a master of his craft, says of the picture, "Of course, I tell people the school bus may have been loaded with workers going to fix a break in the levee, but it looks good." And of course, after 1973, the flow lines were recomputed and the levees had to be raised. When the river would pool against the stratosphere was only a question of time.

The Washington *Post*, in an editorial in November of 1980, called attention to the Corps' efforts to prevent the great shift at Old River, and concluded with this paragraph:

> Who will win as this slow-motion confrontation between humankind and nature goes on? No one really knows. But after watching Mt. St. Helens and listening to the guesses about its performance, if we had to bet, we would bet on the river.

The Corps had already seen that bet, and was about to bump it, too. Even before the muds were dry from the 1973 flood, Corps engineers had begun building a model of Old River at their Waterways Experiment Station, in Vicksburg. The model was to cover an acre and a half. A model of that size was modest for the Corps. Not far away, it had a fifteen-acre model of the Mississippi drainage, where water flowing in from the dendritic tips could get itself together and attack Louisiana. The scale was one human stride to the mile. In the time it took to say "one Mississippi," if fourteen gallons went past Arkansas City that was a Project Flood. Something like eight and a half gallons was "a high-water event." "It's the ultimate sandbox—these guys have made a profession of the sandbox," Tulane's Oliver Houck has said, with concealed admiration. "They've put the whole river in a sandbox." The Old River model not only helped with repairs, it also showed a need for supplementary fortification. Since the first control structure was irreparably damaged, a second one, nearby, with its own inflow channel from the Mississippi, should establish full control at Old River and take pressure off the original structure in times of high stress.

To refine the engineering of the auxiliary structure, several additional models, with movable beds, were built on a distorted scale. Making the vertical scale larger than the horizontal was believed to eliminate surface-tension problems in simulating the turbulence of a real river. The channel beds were covered with crushed coal—which has half the specific gravity of sand—or with walnut shells, which were thought to be better replicas of channel-protecting rock but had an unfortunate tendency to decay, releasing gas bubbles. In one model, the stilling basin below the new structure was filled with driveway-size limestone gravel, each piece meant to represent a derrick stone six feet thick. After enough water had churned through these models to satisfy the designers, ground was broken at Old River, about a third of a mile from the crippled sill, for the Old River Control Auxiliary Structure, the most advanced weapon ever developed to prevent the capture of a river—a handsome gift to the American Ruhr, worth three hundred million dollars. In Vicksburg, Robert Fletcher—a sturdily built, footballish sort of engineer, who had explained to me about the nutshells, the coal, and the gravel—said of the new structure, "I hope it works."

The Old River Control Auxiliary Structure is a rank of seven towers, each buff with a white crown. They are vertical on the upstream side, and they slope toward the Atchafalaya. Therefore, they resemble flying buttresses facing the Mississippi. The towers are separated by six arciform gates, convex to the Mississippi, and hinged in trunnion blocks secured with steel to carom the force of the river into the core of the structure. Lifted by cables, these tainter gates, as they are called, are about as light and graceful as anything could be that has a composite weight of twenty-six hundred tons. Each of them is sixty-two feet wide. They are the strongest the Corps has ever designed and built. A work of engineering such as a Maillart bridge or a bridge by Christian Menn can outdo some other works of art, because it is not only a gift to the imagination but also structural in the matrix of the world. The auxiliary structure at Old River contains too many working components to be classed with such a bridge, but in grandeur and in profile it would not shame a pharaoh.

The original Old River Control project, going on line in 1963, cost eighty-six million dollars. The works of repair and supplement have extended the full cost of the battle to five hundred million. The disproportion in these figures does, of course, reflect inflation, but to a much greater extent it reflects the price of lessons learned. It reflects the fact that no one is stretching words who says that in 1973 the control structure failed. The new one is not only bigger and better and more costly; also, no doubt, there are redundancies in its engineering in memory of '73.

In 1983 came the third-greatest flood of the twentieth century—a narrow but decisive victory for the Corps. The Old River Control Auxiliary Structure was nothing much by then but a foundation that had recently been poured in dry ground. The grout in the old structure kept Old River stuck together. Across the Mississippi, a few miles downstream, the water rose to a threatening level at Louisiana's maximum-security prison. The prison was protected not only by the mainline levee but also by a ring levee of its own. Nonetheless, as things appeared for a while the water was going to pour into the prison. The state would have to move the prisoners, taking them in buses out into the road system, risking Lord knows what. The state went on its knees before the Corps: Do something. The Corps evaluated the situation and decided to bet the rehabilitation of the control structure against the rehabilitation of the prisoners. By letting more water through the control structure, the Corps caused the water at the prison to go down.

Viewed from five or six thousand feet in the air, the structures at Old River inspire less confidence than they do up close. They seem temporary, fragile, vastly outmatched by the natural world—a lesion in the side of the Mississippi butterflied with surgical tape. Under construction nearby is a large hydropower plant that will take advantage of the head between the two rivers and light the city of Vidalia. The channel cut to serve it raises to three the number of artificial outlets opened locally in the side of the Mississippi River, making Old River a complex of canals and artificial islands, and giving it the appearance of a marina. The Corps is officially confident that all this will stay in place, and supports its claim with a good deal more than walnuts. The amount of limestone that has been imported from Kentucky is enough to confuse a geologist. As Fred Chatry once said, "The Corps of Engineers is convinced that the Mississippi River can be convinced to remain where it is."

I once asked Fred Smith, a geologist who works for the Corps at New Orleans District Headquarters, if he thought Old River Control would eventually be overwhelmed. He said, "Capture doesn't have to happen at the control structures. It could happen somewhere else. The river is close to it a little to the north. That whole area is suspect. The Mississippi wants to go west. Nineteen-seventy-three was a forty-year flood. The big one lies out there somewhere—when the structures can't release all the floodwaters and the levee is going to have to give way. That is when the river's going to jump its banks and try to break through."

Geologists in general have declared the capture inevitable, but, of course, they would. They know that in 1852 the Yellow River shifted its course away from the Yellow Sea, establishing a new mouth four hundred miles from the old. They know the stories of catastrophic shifts by the Mekong, the Indus, the Po, the Volga, the Tigris and the Euphrates. The Rosetta branch of the Nile was the main stem of the river three thousand years ago.

Raphael Kazmann, the hydrologic engineer, who is now emeritus at Louisiana State, sat me down in his study in Baton Rouge, instructed me to turn on a tape recorder, and, with reference to Old River Control, said, "I have no fight with the Corps of Engineers. I may be a critic, but I'm not mad at anybody. It's a good design. Don't get me wrong. These guys are the best. If it doesn't work for them, nobody can do it."

A tape recorder was not a necessity for gathering the impression that nobody could do it. "More and more energy is being dissipated there," Kazmann said. "Floods are more frequent. There will be a bigger and bigger differential head as time goes on. It almost went out in '73. Sooner or later, it will be undermined or bypassed—give way. I have a lot of respect for Mother . . . for this alluvial river of ours. I don't want to be around here when it happens."

The Corps would say he won't be.

"Nobody knows where the hundred-year flood is," Kazmann continued. "Perspective should be a minimum of a hundred years. This is an extremely complicated river system altered by works of man. A fifty-year prediction is not reliable. The data have lost their pristine character. It's a mixture of hydrologic events and human events. Floods across the century are getting higher, low stages lower. The Corps of Engineers—they're scared as hell. They don't know what's going to happen. This is planned chaos. The more planning they do, the more chaotic it is. Nobody knows exactly where it's going to end."

THE towboat Mississippi has hit the point of a sandbar. The depth finder shows thirty-eight feet—indicating that there are five fathoms of water between the bottom of the hull and the bed of the river. The depth finder is on the port side of the ship, however, and the sandbar to starboard, only a few feet down. Thus the towboat has come to its convulsive stop, breaking the stride of two major generals and bringing state officials and levee boards out to the rail. General Sands, the division commander, has a look on his face which suggests that Hopkins has just scored on Army but Army will win the game. There is some running around, some eye-bulging, some breaths drawn shallower even than the sandbar—but not here in the pilothouse. John Dugger, the pilot, and Jorge Cano, the local contact pilot, reveal on their faces not the least touch of dismay, or even surprise, whatever they may feel. They behave as if it were absolutely routine to be aiming downstream in midcurrent at zero knots. In a sense, that is true, for this is not some minor navigational challenge, like shooting rapids in an aircraft carrier. This is the Atchafalaya River.

A poker player might get out of an analogous situation by reaching toward a sleeve. A basketball player would reverse pivot—shielding the ball, whirling the body in a complete circle to leave the defender flat as a sandbar. John Dugger seems to be both. He has cut the engines, and now—looking interested, and nothing else—he lets the current take the stern and swing it wide. The big boat spins, reverse pivots, comes off the bar, and leaves it behind.

Conversations resume—in the lounge, on the outer decks, in the pilothouse—and inevitably many of them touch on the subject of controls at Old River. General Sands is saying, "Between 1950 and 1973, there was intensification of land use in the lower Mississippi—a whole generation grew up thinking you could grow soybeans here and never get wet. Since '73, Mother Nature has been trying to catch up. There have been seven high-water events since 1973. Now the aux-

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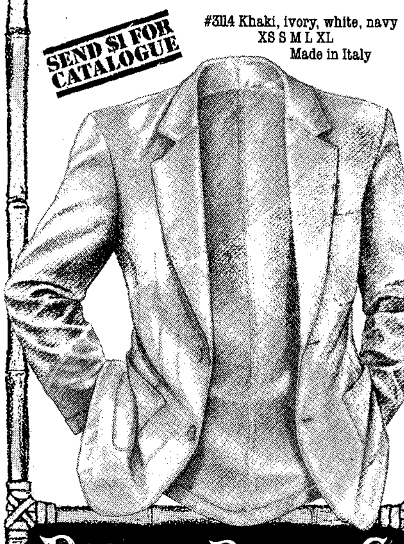

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iliary structure gives these folks all the assurance they need that Old River can continue to operate."

I ask if anyone agrees that the Atchafalaya could capture the Mississippi near the control structures and not through them.

General Sands replies, "I don't know that I'm personally smart enough to answer that, but I'd say no."

Lieutenant Colonel Ed Willis asks C. J. Nettles, chief of operations for the New Orleans District, if he thinks the auxiliary structure will do the job.

Nettles says, "The jury is out on that one," and adds that he is not as confident about it as others are.

At Old River a couple of days ago, near the new structure, Nettles and LeRoy Dugas were looking over a scene full of cargo barges, labor barges, crawling bulldozers, hundreds of yards of articulated concrete mattress revetments recently sunk into place, and millions of tons of new limestone riprap. Nettles asked Dugie how long he thought the new armor would last.

Dugie said, "Two high waters."

General Sands advances a question: "Had man not settled in southern Louisiana, what would it be like today? Under nature's scenario, what would it be like?" And, not waiting for an answer, he supplies one himself: "If only nature were here, people—except for some hunters and fishermen—couldn't exist here."

Under nature's scenario, with many distributaries spreading the floodwaters left and right across the big deltaic plain, virtually the whole region would be covered—with fresh sediments as well as water. In an average year, some two hundred million tons of sediment are in transport in the river. This is where the foreland Rockies go, the western Appalachians. Southern Louisiana is a very large lump of mountain butter, eight miles thick where it rests upon the continental shelf, half that under New Orleans, a mile and a third at Old River. It is the nature of unconsolidated sediments to compact, condense, and crustally sink. So the whole deltaic plain, a superhimalaya upside down, is to varying extents subsiding, as it has been for thousands of years. Until about 1900, the river and its distributaries were able to compensate for the subsidence with the amounts of fresh sediment they spread in flood. Across the centuries, distribution was uneven, as channels shifted and land would sink in one place and fill in somewhere else, but over all the land-building process was net positive. It was abetted by decaying vegetation, which went into the flooded silts and made soil. Vegetation cannot decay unless it grows first, and it grew in large part on nutrients supplied by floodwaters.

"In the seventeenth century, the Mississippi was very porous along its banks, and water left it in many places," Fred Chatry reminds us. "Only at low water was it completely confined. Now, in two thousand miles, the first place where water naturally escapes the Mississippi is at Bayou Baptiste Collette—sixty miles below New Orleans."

What was a net gain before 1900 has by now been a net loss for nearly a hundred years, and the Louisiana we have known—from Old River and the Acadian world to Bayou Baptiste Collette—is sinking. Sediments are being kept within the mainline levees and shot into the Gulf at the rate of three hundred and fifty-six thousand tons a day—shot over the shelf like peas through a peashooter, and lost to the abyssal plain. As waters rise ever higher between levees, the ground behind the levees subsides, with the result that the Mississippi delta plain has become an exaggerated Venice, two hundred miles wide—its rivers, its bayous, its artificial canals a trelliswork of water among subsiding lands.

The medians of interstates are water. St. Bernard Parish, which includes suburbs of New Orleans and is larger than the state of Delaware, is two per cent terra firma, eighteen per cent wetland, and eighty per cent water. A ring levee may surround a whole parish. A ring levee may surround fifty-five square miles of soybeans. Every square foot within a ring levee forces water upward somewhere else.

An Alexander Calder might revel in these motions—interdependent, interconnected, related to the flow at Old River. Calder would have understood Old River Control: the place where the work is attached to the ceiling, and below which everything—New Orleans, Morgan City, the river swamp of the Atchafalaya—dangles and swings.

Something like half of New Orleans

is now below sea level—as much as fifteen feet. New Orleans, surrounded by levees, is emplaced between Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi like a broad shallow bowl. Nowhere is New Orleans higher than the river's natural bank. Underprivileged people live in the lower elevations, and always have. The rich—by the river—occupy the highest ground. In New Orleans, income and elevation can be correlated on a literally sliding scale: the Garden District on the highest level, Stanley Kowalski in the swamp. The Garden District and its environs are locally known as uptown.

Torrential rains fall on New Orleans—enough to cause flash floods inside the municipal walls. The water has nowhere to go. Left on its own, it would form a lake, rising inexorably from one level of the economy to the next. So it has to be pumped out. Every drop of rain that falls on New Orleans evaporates or is pumped out. Its removal lowers the water table and accelerates the city's subsidence. Where marshes have been drained to create tracts for new housing, ground will shrink, too. People buy landfill to keep up with the Joneses. In the words of Bob Fairless, of the New Orleans District engineers, "It's almost an annual spring ritual to get a load of dirt and fill in the low spots on your lawn." A child jumping up and down on such a lawn can cause the earth to move under another child, on the far side of the lawn.

Many houses are built on slabs that firmly rest on pilings. As the turf around a house gradually subsides, the slab seems to rise. Where the driveway was once flush with the floor of the carport, a bump appears. The front walk sags like a hammock. The sidewalk sags. The bump up to the carport, growing, becomes high enough to knock the front wheels out of alignment. Sakrete appears, like putty beside a windowpane, to ease the bump. The property sinks another foot. The house stays where it is, on its slab and pilings. A ramp is built to get the car into the carport. The ramp rises three feet. But the yard, before long, has subsided four. The carport becomes a porch, with hanging plants and steep wooden steps. A carport that is not firmly anchored may dangle from the side of a house like a third of a drop-leaf table. Under the house, daylight appears. You can see under the slab and out the other side. More landfill or more concrete is packed around the edges to hide the ugly scene. A gas main, broken by the settling earth, leaks below the slab. The sealed cavity fills with gas. The house blows sky high.

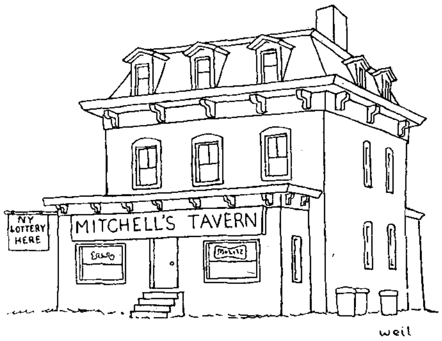
"The people cannot have wells, and so they take rain-water," Mark Twain observed in the eighteen-eighties. "Neither can they conveniently have cellars or graves, the town being built upon 'made' ground; so they do without both, and few of the living complain, and none of the others." The others may not complain, but they sometimes leave. New Orleans is not a place for interment. In all its major cemeteries, the clients lie aboveground. In the intramural flash floods, coffins go out of their crypts and take off down the street.

The water in New Orleans' natural aquifer is modest in amount and even less appealing than the water in the river. The city consumes the effluent of nearly half of America, and, more immediately, of the American Ruhr. None of these matters withstanding, in 1984 New Orleans took first place in the annual Drinking Water Taste Test Challenge of the American Water Works Association.

The river goes through New Orleans like an elevated highway. Jackson Square, in the French Quarter, is on high ground with respect to the rest of New Orleans, but even from the benches of Jackson Square one looks up across the levee at the hulls of passing ships. Their keels are higher than the AstroTurf in the Superdome, and if somehow the ships could turn and move at river level into the city and into the stadium they would hover above the playing field like blimps.

In the early nineteen-eighties, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built a new large district headquarters in New Orleans. It is a tetragon, several stories high, with expanses of sheet glass, and it is right beside the river. Its foundation was dug in the mainline levee. That, to a fare-thee-well, is putting your money where your mouth is.

Among the five hundred miles of levee deficiencies now calling for attention along the Mississippi River, the most serious happen to be in New Orleans. Among other factors, the freeboard—the amount of levee that reaches above flood levels—has to be higher in New Orleans to combat the waves of ships. Elsewhere, the deficiencies are averaging between one and two feet with respect to the computed high-water flow line, which goes on rising as runoffs continue to speed up and waters are increasingly confined. Not only is the water higher. The levees tend to sink as well. They press down on the mucks beneath them and squirt materials out to the sides. Their crowns have to be built up. "You put five feet on and three feet sink," a Corps engineer remarked to me one day. This is especially true of the levees that frame the Atchafalaya swamp, so the Corps has given up trying to fight the subsidence there with earth movers alone, and has built concrete floodwalls along the tops of the levees, causing the largest river swamp in North America to appear to be the world's largest prison. It keeps in not only water, of course, but silt. Gradually, the swamp elevations are building up. The people of Acadiana say that the swamp would be the safest place in which to seek refuge in a major flood, because the swamp is higher than the land outside the levees.



As sediments slide down the continental slope and the river is prevented from building a proper lobe—as the delta plain subsides and is not replenished—erosion eats into the coastal marshes, and quantities of Louisiana steadily disappear. The net loss is over fifty square miles a year. In the middle of the nineteenth century, a fort was built about a thousand feet from a saltwater bay east of New Orleans. The fort is now collapsing into the bay. In a hundred years, Louisiana as a whole has decreased by a million acres. Plaquemines Parish is coming to pieces like old rotted cloth. A hundred years hence, there will in all likelihood be no Plaquemines Parish, no Terrebonne Parish. Such losses are being accelerated by access canals to the sites of oil and gas wells. After the canals are dredged, their width increases on its own, and they erode the region from the inside. A typical three-hundred-foot oil-and-gas canal will be six hundred feet wide in five years. There are in Louisiana ten thousand miles of canals. In the nineteen-fifties, after Louisiana had been made nervous by the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Corps of Engineers built the Mississippi River–Gulf Outlet, a shipping canal that saves forty miles by traversing marsh country straight from New Orleans to the Gulf. The canal is known as Mr. Go, and shipping has largely ignored it. Mr. Go, having eroded laterally for twenty-five years, is as much as three times its original width. It has devastated twenty-four thousand acres of wetlands, replacing them with open water. A mile of marsh will reduce a coastal-storm-surge wave by about one inch. Where fifty miles of marsh are gone, fifty inches of additional water will inevitably surge. The Corps has been obliged to deal with this fact by completing the ring of levees around New Orleans, thus creating New Avignon, a walled medieval city accessed by an interstate that jumps over the walls.

"The coast is sinking out of sight," Oliver Houck has said. "We've reversed Mother Nature." Hurricanes greatly advance the coastal erosion process, tearing up landscape made weak by the confinement of the river. The threat of destruction from the south is even greater than the threat from the north.

I went to see Sherwood Gagliano one day—an independent coastal geologist and regional planner who lives in Baton Rouge. "We must recognize that natural processes cannot be restored," he told me. "We can't put it back the way it was. The best we can do is try to get it back in balance, try to treat early symptoms. It's like treating cancer. You get in early, you may do something." Gagliano has urged that water be diverted to compensate for the nutrient starvation and sediment deprivation caused by the levees. In other words, open holes in the riverbank and allow water and sediment to build small deltas into disappearing parishes. "If we don't do these things, we're going to end up with a skeletal framework with levees around it—a set of peninsulas to the Gulf," he said. "We will lose virtually all of our wetlands. The cost of maintaining protected areas will be very high. There will be no buffer between them and the coast."

Professor Kazmann, of L.S.U., seemed less hopeful. He said, "Attempts to save the coast are pretty much spitting in the ocean."

The Corps is not about to give up the battle, or so much as imagine impending defeat. "Deltas wax and wane," remarks Fred Chatry, in the pilothouse of the Mississippi. "You have to be continuously adjusting the system in consonance with changes that occur." Southern Louisiana may be a house of cards, but, as General Sands suggested, virtually no one would be living in it were it not for the Corps. There is no going back, as Gagliano says—not without going away. And there will be no retreat without a struggle. The Army engineers did not pick this fight. When it started, they were still in France. The guide levees, ring levees, spillways, and floodways that dangle and swing from Old River are here because people, against odds, willed them to be here. Or, as the historian Albert Cowdrey expresses it in the introduction to "Land's End," the Corps' official narrative of its efforts in southern Louisiana, "Society required artifice to survive in a region where nature might reasonably have asked a few more eons to finish a work of creation that was incomplete."

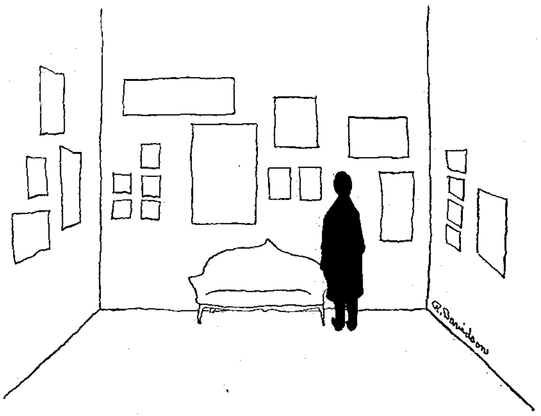
THE towboat Mississippi is more than halfway down the Atchafalaya now—beyond the leveed farmland of the upper basin and into the storied swamp. The willows on the two sides of the river, however, continue to be so dense that they block from sight what lies behind them, and all we can see is the unobstructed waterway running on and on, half a mile wide, in filtered sunlight and the shadows of clouds. A breeze has put waves on the water. Coming over the starboard quarter, it more than quells the humidity and the heat. Nevertheless, as one might expect, most of the people remain indoors, in the chilled atmosphere of the pilothouse, the coat-and-tie comfort of the lounge. A deck of cards appears, and a game of bouré develops, in showboat motif, among various civilian millionaires—Ed Kyle, of the Morgan City Harbor & Terminal District, dealing off the top to the Pontchartrain Levee Board, the Lafourche Basin Levee Board, the Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District. Oliver Houck—the law professor, former general counsel of the National Wildlife Federation, whose lone presence signals the continuing existence of the environmental movement—naturally stays outdoors. He has established an eyrie on an upper deck, to windward. Tall and loosely structured, Houck could be a middle-aged high jumper, still in shape to clear six feet. His face in repose is melancholy—made so, perhaps, by the world as his mind would have it in comparison with the world as he sees it. What he is seeing at the moment—in the center of the greatest river swamp in North America, which he and his battalions worked fifteen years to "save"—is a walled-off monotony of sky and water.

General Sands joins him, and they talk easily and informally, as two people will who have faced each other across great quantities of time and paper. Sands remarks again that on inspection trips such as this one he has become used to being "beaten on the head and shoulders" by almost everyone he encounters, not just the odd ecologue attired in alienation.

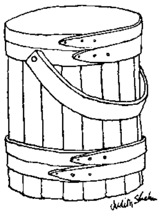
Houck addresses himself to the head, the shoulders, and the chest, saying that he has deep reservations about Sands' uniform: all those brass trinkets and serried stars, the castle keeps, the stratified ribbons. He says that Sands' habiliments constitute a form of intimidation, especially in a region of the country that has not lost its respect for the military presence. Sands' habiliments are not appropriate in a civilian milieu. "You are Army—an untypical American entity to be performing a political role like this," Houck says to him, beating on. He tells Sands that he reminds him of "a politician on the stump, going around stroking his constituency." He calls him "a political water czar."

Sands implicitly reminds Houck that if it were not for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers there wouldn't be any stump, the constituency would be somewhere else, and Houck's neighborhood would be nine feet under water. He says, "Under nature's scenario, think what it would be like."

The water czar, I feel a duty to insert, is not the very model of a major general. If he were to



chew nails, he would break his teeth. I am not attempting to suggest that he lacks the presence of a general, or the mien, or the bearing. Yet he is, withal, somewhat less martial than most English teachers. Effusive and friendly in a folk-and-country way, courteous, accommodating, he is of the sort whose upward mobility would be swift in a service industry. Make no mistake, he is a general. "Shall we just go to the Four Seasons? A nice little place to have lunch," he said one day in Vicksburg, and we drove to a large building in the center of town, where his car was left directly in front of the main entrance, beside a bright-yellow curb under various belligerent signs forbidding parking. It stayed there for an hour while he had his crab gumbo.



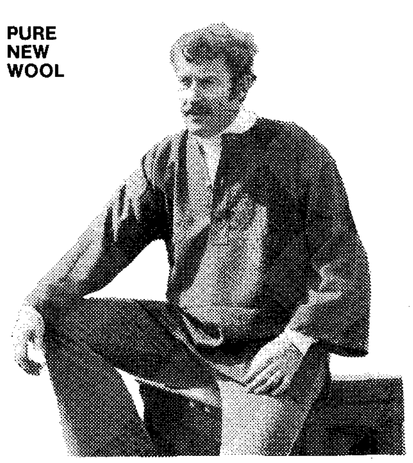
We approach, on the right, a gap in the Atchafalaya's bank, where the willows open to reveal a plexus of bayous. Houck has been complaining that the old Cajun swamp life of the Atchafalaya Basin is gone now, and has been for many years, as a result of the volumes of water concentrated in the floodway and of rules forbidding people to live inside the levees. "This single piece of plumbing," he says of the Atchafalaya, "is the last great river-overflow swamp in the world and *also* the biggest floodway in the world—all to protect Baton Rouge and New Orleans." We now come abreast of the gap on the right, and it ends the tedium of the reach upriver. It is a broad window into stands of cypress, their wide fluted bases attached to their reflections in still, dark water. "How I love them," says Houck, who is a conservationist of the sunset school, with legal skills adjunct to the force of his emotion. Pointing into the beauty of the bayous, he informs General Sands, "That's what it's all about."

The General takes in the scene without comment. In silence, we look at the water-standing trees and into narrow passages that disappear among them. They draw me into thoughts of my own. I first went in there in 1980—that is, into the Atchafalaya swamp, away from its floodway levees, and miles from the river. There were four of us, in canoes. The guide was Charles Fryling, a professor of landscape architecture at Louisiana State University, who, among the environmentalists of the eighteenth state, plays Romulus to Oliver Houck's Remus. Fryling is a tall man with a broad forehead, whose hair falls straight to his eyes without the slightest suggestion that comb or brush has ever been invited to intrude upon nature. In 1973, when he moved into his house, on the periphery of Baton Rouge, it sat on a smooth green lawn, in a neighborhood of ranch contemporaries, each on a smooth green lawn. Fryling's yard is now a rough green forest, its sweet gums, grapevines, pepper vines, rattan vines, hackberries, passionflowers, and climbing ferns a showcase of natural succession. In Fryling's words, "It beats the hell out of mowing the lawn." The trees are thirty feet high.

Fryling speaks in a slow country roll that could win him a job in movies. He would be Li'l Abner, or Candide at Fort Dix—the soldier who appears slow in basic training and dies on an intelligence mission twenty-five miles behind enemy lines. He is a graduate of the illustrious forestry school of the State University of New York (Syracuse), his advanced degree is from Harvard, and—to continue the escalation—he knows how to get from here to there in the swamp. This is a remarkable feat in seven hundred thousand acres that change so much and so often that they are largely unmappable. Fryling understands the minor bayous. Sometimes they run one way, sometimes the other. The water contains sediment or is clear. "See. The water is clearer. It's coming toward us. It's coming down from Bayou Pigeon. We'll get through."

If you ask him what something is, he knows. It's green hawthorn. It's deciduous holly. It's water privet. It's water elm. It's a water moccasin—there on the branch of that water oak. The moccasin doesn't move. A moccasin never backs off. Dragonflies land on the gunwales. In the Atchafalaya, dragonflies are known as snake doctors. Leaving the open bayou, the canoes turn into the forest and slide among the trunks of cypress under feathery arrowhead crowns. "Young cypress need a couple of years on dry land to get started, but we send so much water through the Atchafalaya that young trees can't get going. So existing cypress are not—as trees are generally thought to be—a renewable resource. We have to protect them in order to have them."

To be in the Atchafalaya is to float among trees under silently flying blue herons, to see the pileated woodpecker,



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to hope to see an ivorybill, to hear the prothonotary warbler. The barred owl has a speaking voice as guttural as a dog's. It seems to be growling, "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for y'all?" The barred owl—staring from a branch straight down into the canoes—appears to be a parrot in camouflage. In the language of the Longtown Choctaw, "Hacha Falaia" meant "Long River." (The words are reversed in translation.) Since my first travels with Fryling, those rippling syllables have symbolized for me the bilateral extensions of the phrase "control of nature." Atchafalaya. The word will now come to mind more or less in echo of any struggle against natural forces—heroic or venal, rash or well advised—when human beings conscript themselves to fight against the earth, to take what is not given, to rout the destroying enemy, to surround the base of Mt. Olympus demanding and expecting the surrender of the gods. The Atchafalaya—this most apparently natural of natural worlds, this swamp of the anhinga, swamp of the nocturnal bear—lies between walls, like a zoo. It is utterly dependent on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose decisions at Old River can cut it dry or fill it with water and silt. Fryling gave me a green-and-white sticker that said "ATCHAFALAYA." I put it in a window of my car. It has been there for many years, causing drivers on the New Jersey Turnpike to veer in close and crowd my lane while staring at a word that signifies collision.

In the Atchafalaya more recently, we came upon a sport fisherman in a skiff called Mon Ark. "There's all kind of land out there now," he said. He meant not only that the wet parts were low but also that the dry parts were growing. In the Atchafalaya, the land comes and goes, but it comes more than it goes. As the overflow swamp of the only remaining distributary in the delta—the only place other than the mouth of the Mississippi where silt can go—the Atchafalaya is silting in. From a light plane at five hundred feet, this is particularly evident as the reflection of the sun races through trees and shoots forth light from the water. The reflection disappears when it crosses the accumulating land. If land accretes from the shore of a lake or a bayou, the new ground belongs to the shore's owner. If it accretes as an island, it belongs to the state—a situation of which Gilbert would be sure to inform Sullivan. Some fifty thousand acres are caught in this tug-of-war. Wet and dry, three-quarters of the Atchafalaya swampland is privately owned. Nearly all the owners are interested less in the swamp than in what may lie beneath it. The conservationists, the Corps, landowners, and recreational interests have worked out a compromise by which all parties putatively get what they want: floodway, fishway, oil field, Eden. From five hundred feet up, the world below is green swamp everywhere, far as the eye can see. The fact is, though, that the eye can't see very far. The biggest river swamp in North America, between its demarcating levees, is seventeen miles wide and sixty miles long. It is about half of what it was when it began at the Mississippi River and went all the way to Bayou Teche.

The old life of the basin is not entirely gone. It is true that people don't collect moss anymore to use in stuffing furniture, true that the great virgin cypresses are away. Their flared stumps remain, like cabins standing in the water. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cajuns made their lives and livings in the swamp. Their grocery stores were afloat, and moved among them, camp to camp. It is true all that has vanished, and the Cajuns live outside the levees, but they and others—operating for the most part alone or in pairs—go into the swamp and take twenty-five million dollars' worth of protein out of the water in any given year. The fish alone can average a thousand pounds an acre, and that, according to Fryling, is "more fish than in any other natural water system in the United States"—two and a half times as productive as the Everglades. The fish are not in the conversation, however, when compared with the crawfish.

I know a crawfisherman named Mike Bourque, who lives in Catahoula. I remember as if it were today running his lines with him. "Watch your hands. Don't put 'em on the side of the boat. 'Cause smash 'em," he said as we went out of Bayou Gravenburg and headed into the trees. His boat was not a canoe, and the object on the stern was no paddle. It was a fifty-horse Mariner, enough for lift-off if the boat had wings. Bourque's brother-in-law was with us. In French, Bourque told him that he was affecting the balance and to shift his position in the boat. Then, addressing me in English, he said, "Watch yourself, I got to jump that log." Ahead of us, half hidden in water hyacinths, was an impressive floating log, with a solid diameter of about two feet. The boat smashed against it, thrust up and over it, with a piercing aluminum screech. The boat was about seventeen feet long. The brother-in-law, Dave Soileau, called it a bateau. Bourque called it a skiff. "French and English—we mix it up," he said. Ordinarily, he works alone, and talks a good deal to himself. "When I talk to myself, I talk in French. When I meet other fishermen, ninety per cent of the time we speak French." If he doesn't know them, he knows where they live, because each town has its accent.

Like everyone else, he calls the hyacinths lilies—water lilies. This densely growing plant—a waterborne kudzu, an exotic from the Orient—has come to plague Southern waterways and spread over marshes like nuclear winter closing many forms of life. That is not the case, however, in the Atchafalaya, where the lilies are good for the crawfish. The young feed on stuff that clings to the roots. On heavy stems, the water hyacinths grow three to four feet high, so a lot of power is needed to get through them. "You'll never see a fisherman with less than a fifty-horse motor."

Bourque moved the skiff from tree to tree as if he were on snowshoes in a sugarbush emptying buckets of sap. The crawfish cages were chicken-wire pillows with openings at one end. Bourque pulled them out of the water on cords that were tied to the trees, and poured the crawfish into a device that looked something like a roasting pan and was hinged to the side of the boat. He calls it the trough. Open at the inner end, it forms a kind of ramp down which the crawfish crawl until they drop into a bucket. Dead bait fish, dead crawfish, and other detritus remain in the trough, and thus the living creatures winnow themselves from what is thrown away. Snakes are thrown away. Some of the used bait fish have less remaining flesh than skeletons lifted by waiters who work in white gloves. The larger crawfish weigh a quarter of a pound and are nine inches long, with claw spans greater than that. When the bucket is full, the crawfish in their motions seem to simmer at the top. "*C'est bon. C'est bon. Où est le sac?*" said Bourque, and Soileau handed him a plastic-burlap sack. Containing forty pounds each, the sacks began to pile up. The crawfish lay quiet. When a sack was moved, or even touched, though, the commotion inside sounded like heavy rain.

The boat climbed another log. The engine cavitated. We broke through brush like an elephant. Bourque had been following what he called the driftwood line, where a small change in depth had caused driftwood to linger. To him the swamp topography was as distinctive and varied as the neighborhoods of a city would be to someone else—these subworlds of the Atchafalaya, out past Bayou Gravenburg, on toward the Red Eye Swamp. "This line used to go in back there, but I moved them out in front," he said in a place that seemed much too redundant to have a back or a front. Colored ribbons, which he called flags, helped to distinguish the fishermen's trees, but he could run his lines without them, covering his four hundred cages. He did about sixty an hour. Soileau, using a grain scoop, shovelled dead alewives and compressed pellets of Acadiana Choice Crawfish Bait into each emptied cage, and Bourque returned it to the water. Bourque told Soileau, who is a biologist with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, to quit the government and come work for him. Soileau said, "For ten dollars a day?"

Bourque said, "Good future. No benefits."

We were in a coulee, which is like a slough but deeper and with slushier muds at the bottom. A cage came up with seventy crawfish, all dead. The cage had been too low in the muck, where the creatures died in an anoxic slurry. They stirred it up themselves. The cage should just lightly touch the bottom, with the closed end slightly raised.

Bourque next pulled up an empty cage. "Somebody helped me out," he remarked, and added that he had occasionally met a thief in the act of raiding one of his cages.

Soileau said, "There's only one thing to do. Go straight to him, board his vessel, and start slugging. There have been no deaths."

Theft was rising in direct proportion to unemployment. Oil companies owned that part of the swamp. Fishermen have, in fact, been arrested for trespass. Fryling's wife, Doris Falkenheiner, defends them in court. Meanwhile, so many fishermen work the watery forest that there is a plastic ribbon on almost every tree. The fishermen say they have to bring their own trees.

We hit another log. We ran between a cypress and its knees. "We're getting up on the ridge," Bourque said, referring to a subtle, invisible feature of the bottom of the swamp. Out of a cage came a white crawfish, a male. (The male has longer arms.) Crawfish are red, white, or blue. The white ones like the sand of the ridge. Blue ones are rare. Bourque sees fewer than twenty a year. Now he was reaching down into the water for a cage that had been separated from its string by another fisherman's motor.

"*Touchez la?*" asked Soileau.

Bourque answered, "Yes." Then he said, "*Ah, bon,*" as he retrieved the cage.

"Are y'all hungry?" Bourque asked.

"I live hungry," said Soileau.

Bourque turned off the motor and we stopped for lunch: ham sandwiches, Royal Crown, Mr. Porker fried cured pork skins. It was seven-thirty in the morning.

We got up around three-thirty and were driving down the levee by four o'clock—in Bourque's pickup, with the skiff behind. Soileau made the comment that the levees were like cancer, because they had to keep growing while they sank into the swamp. After twenty-five miles, we went down a ramp to a boat landing, where forty-one pickups had arrived before us. Roughly five thousand people take crawfish from the swamp, annually trapping twenty-three million pounds.

Now, at lunchtime, as the early-morning sun began to penetrate the trees, we were looking out on one lovely scene, with tupelo and cypress rising from the water, and pollen on the water like pale-green silk. "The best months are Epp Rill and May," Bourque said. "The water might rise in October sometimes. I'll come and try." He was wearing mirrored sun-

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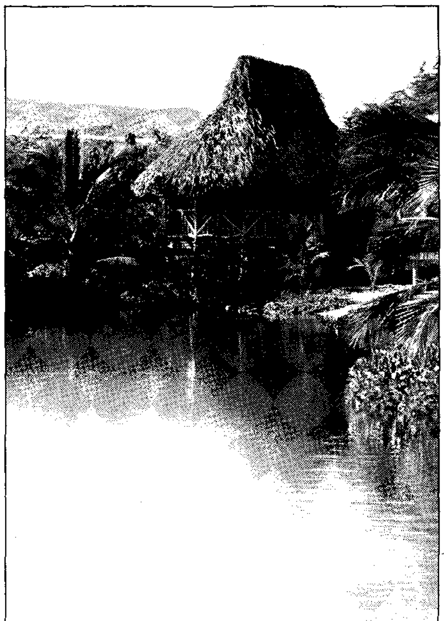

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glasses, a soft cap with a buttoned visor, white rubber boots, and yellow rubber overalls slashed at the crotch. Of middle height, blond and fine-featured, he had sandy hair around his ears and a large curl in back, like a breaking wave. His low-sill mustache looked French. He went to St. Martinville High School, as did Soileau, who married the youngest of Bourque's six sisters. In large script below the windows of a drugstore in St. Martinville, a sign says, "*Sidney Dupois Pharmacien—Au Service de la Santé de Votre Famille.*" The Teche *News*, published down the street, has a regular column headlined "PENSE DONC!!" and contains marriage and death notices about people with names like Boudreau, Tesreau, Landreaux, Passeau, Bordagaray, Lajoie, Angelle, and Guidry. Bourque was the youngest in his family and the only sibling male. He explains that Cajuns keep going until they get a male, and this was where the Bourques stopped.

Soileau passed the pork skins. Bourque chewed them crunchily. "Crawfish are *écrevisses* in French," he said. "We call them crawfish."

I mentioned that *écrevisses* are cherished by chefs in France.

Soileau said, "I hear you get only three or four."

Bourque had a recipe of which the nouveaux cuisiniers may not have heard. "Sauté onions in butter, then put in fat out of the head for ten or fifteen minutes, then put meat in for a few minutes more," he said. "Salt. Cayenne pepper. Onion tops. What makes the étouffée is the fat. Some people put a little roux in there. You can stretch it like that." Crawfish étouffée: the Cajun quenelle de brochet. The meat is ground, but not to the end of texture. On Easter Sunday morning in Catahoula, the Bourques have a crawfish ball. At least, I thought that's what they were saying until I saw what they did. They boiled a hundred pounds of crawfish. They ate a crimson mountain of condensed lobsters.

Now we were running in Bayou Eugene, which Soileau and Bourque lyrically pronounced in three syllables —"by yooz yen." We came upon a beaver on a floating log. This was not the animal that founded a nation, the alert and agile slapper of the boreal lakes. This was a Louisiana beaver—huge, half asleep, prone like a walrus, a mound of cinnamon fur with nothing much to do but eat. There was no need to dam a thing here. The Corps of Engineers would see to that. The beaver topples trees just to eat the bark. There is no mandate to practice conservation when you are what is being conserved. "A willow branch eaten by a beaver is just as smooth as if it had been sanded," Soileau remarked. "There's nothing prettier than a willow branch eaten by a beaver." Nutria live in the swamp as well. Bourque said that he sees only four or five alligators a year. A friend of his lost a finger to a cottonmouth. "He was walking through thick lilies, very high lilies, to make a road for his pirogue. The snake bit his finger through a glove." Among the crowns of the cypress, a heron flapped by. Bourque called it a *gros bec*. Soileau called it a yellow-crowned night heron. Bourque said, "The *gros bec* is here for the same purpose we are: to get crawfish." A mulberry-blue crawfish came into the boat from a cage that was deep in the Red Eye Swamp.

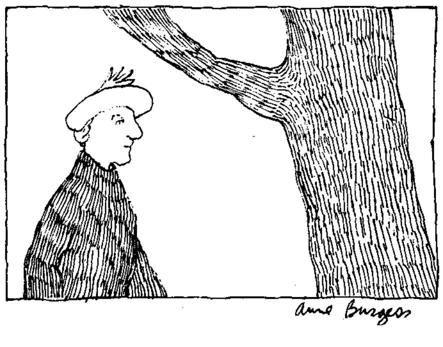
Farther down the trap line, Bourque said, "Crawfish is something hard to understand. When it's muddier, they're hungrier. The water's not muddy enough out here." There was a time when that sort of thing was a fact of nature. Now, of course, he blamed the Corps. "I'd like more water," he continued. "A lot of times, they've got much more in the Mississippi than they can use. They say they give us thirty per cent. We don't know if that's true."

I told him I had seen a tally sheet at Old River Control, and it said that 31.1 per cent had gone down the Atchafalaya the day before.

"I'd like to see that paper when the river starts dropping," Bourque responded. "I don't see that we get thirty per cent except when there is plenty of water. If they close the locks, it start dropping fast."

I mentioned the towboat Mississippi and its low-water Atchafalaya inspection trip, and asked if he had ever gone aboard to complain.

"I never heard of that until you mentioned it right now," he said. "They know we want more water. They don't have to ask."



I remembered Rabalais saying, "After they built the structure and started stabilizing this water and so on, the main complaint was the people from the Atchafalaya Basin—all your crawfish fishermen, and so on. They claimed they wasn't getting enough water, but over the years they've learned to live with it, and they catch as many crawfish, I would say, now as they did then."

And Peck Oubre, the lock mechanic, asking Rabalais, "Before they put in Old River Lock and the control structure, what was the people talking about when the water used to rise and come through here? Were they complaining about it?"

"No," said Rabalais. "They wouldn't complain, because there wasn't nothing you could do."

Bourque said that farmers who raise crawfish in artificial ponds—a fairly new and rapidly expanding industry—were influencing the Corps to keep the water low in the Atchafalaya in order to squeeze out swamp fishermen like him, whose forebears were swamp fishermen. It is possible that the charge he was making was based on pure suspicion, but now that the structures were emplaced at Old River—and the Corps had assumed charge of the latitude flow—suspicion was one more force they had to try to control.

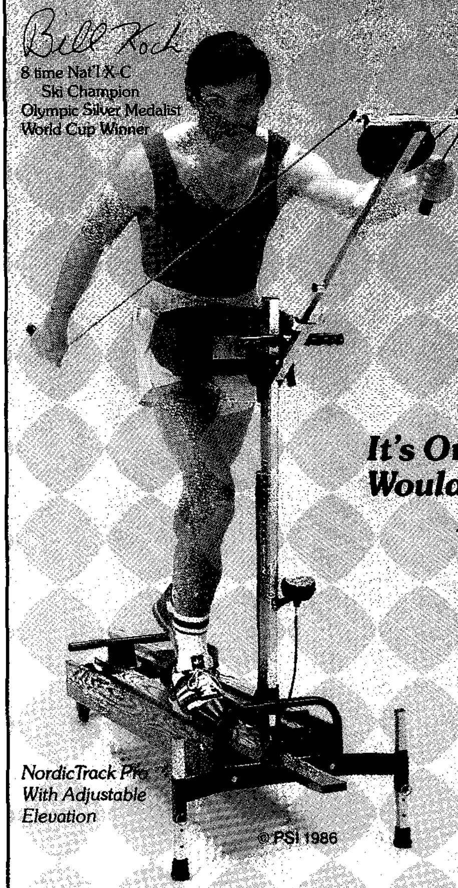
As we were heading back toward the landing, Bourque remarked, surprisingly, "It's good we have the levees. Before the levees, the crawfish, they was spread all over."

For bait, for gasoline, and so forth, the cost of the day's run was seventy-five dollars. At the boat landing, Bourque sold the crawfish for three hundred and sixty. The buyer was Michael Williams, a youth from New Iberia with a mane of Etruscan hair. He identified himself as a poet, and said, "For poems there's not a market anymore. The days of the Romantic poets is gone. That's like in the past." So he also writes country-and-western lyrics. He recited one that began, "Oh, it's hard to write a love song/If you've never been in love." He had a pit bull named Demon with him. Demon went into the water and snapped at waves. He tried to bite motorboat waves.

I EMERGE from my remembrances standing at the rail, bewitched by the impenetrable vegetation. No part of those scenes that lie behind it can be felt or sensed from the decks of the Mississippi as the towboat moves on between the curtains of willow and straight down the middle of the bifurcated swamp. The others continue to talk, argue. The point is made that if the Mississippi River were to shift into the Atchafalaya the entire basin would fill with sediment and become a bottomland hardwood forest. "When nature shifts, man shifts," Oliver Houck says. The petrochemical industries would move to the basin, too, rebuilding themselves on Bayou Eugene, extruding plastics in the Red Eye Swamp. There are people in Morgan City who envision another Ruhr Valley up the Atchafalaya. Morgan City would be the new New Orleans.

The new New Orleans—seventeen miles from the Gulf—is not far ahead of us now. The landscape is changing to coastal marsh. Going below, I make a circumspect visit to the card game in the lounge. The Pontchartrain Levee Board draws three, Teche-Vermilion needs two. Ed Kyle, of Morgan City, whose pockets are familiar with United States currency bearing portraits that most people in their lifetimes never see and do not even know exist, throws one dollar into the pot. In the center of the table, the greenbacks reach flood stage.

Now, through the picture windows at the front of the lounge, our destination is in view: Morgan City, the Cajun Carcassonne—a very small town behind a very high wall. A railroad bridge and two highway bridges leap the Atchafalaya and seem to touch gingerly on the two sides, as if they were landing on lily pads. Flood stage in Morgan City is four feet above sea level. A dirt levee protected the town until 1937. It was succeeded by concrete walls six and then eight feet high. As floods grew—and the Atchafalaya became the only distributary of the Mississippi—sandbags and wooden baffles were piled up in haste on top of the eight-foot walls. Since it is the Corps' intention that fifty per cent of a Design Flood go down the Atchafalaya, and since Morgan City is on a small island of no relief situated directly in the path of the planned deluge, the Corps has built the present wall twenty-two feet high. It is of such regal and formidable demeanor that it attracts tourists. It is a wall that imagines water—a sheet of water at least twenty feet thick between Morgan City and the horizon. The sea-



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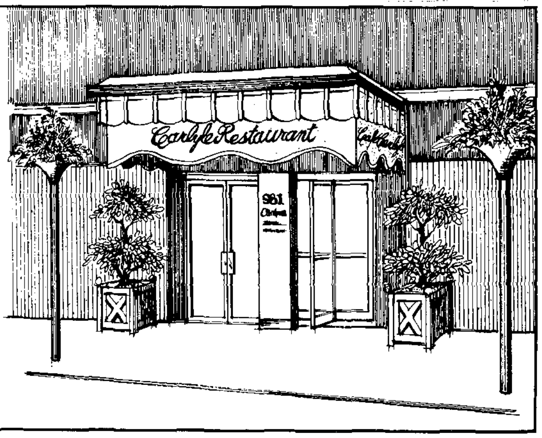

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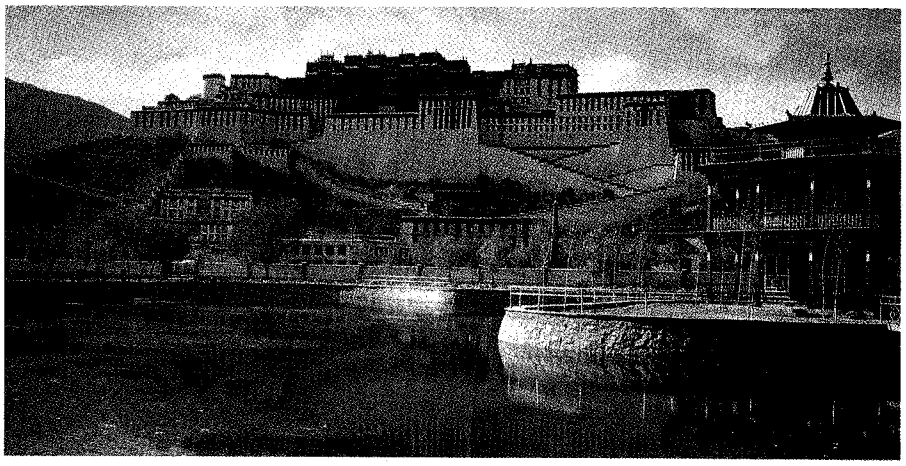

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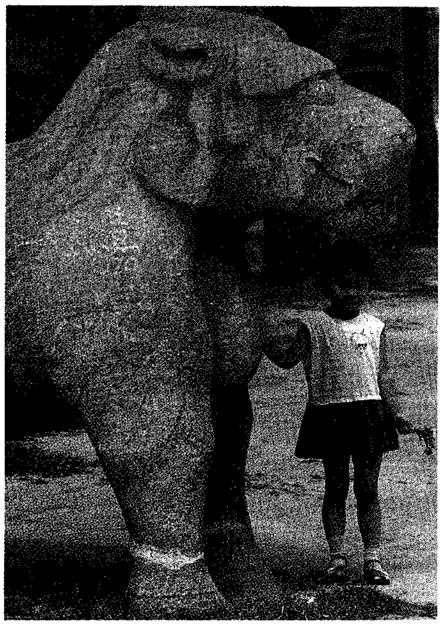

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wall, as it is known, rises to the skirts of palms that stand in rows behind it. From the approaching towboat we can see a steeple, a flagpole, a water tower, but not the town's low avenues or deeply shaded streets. Damocles would not have been so lonely had he lived in Morgan City. In a proportion inverse to the seawall's great size, the seawall betokens a vulnerability the like of which is hard to find so far from a volcano.

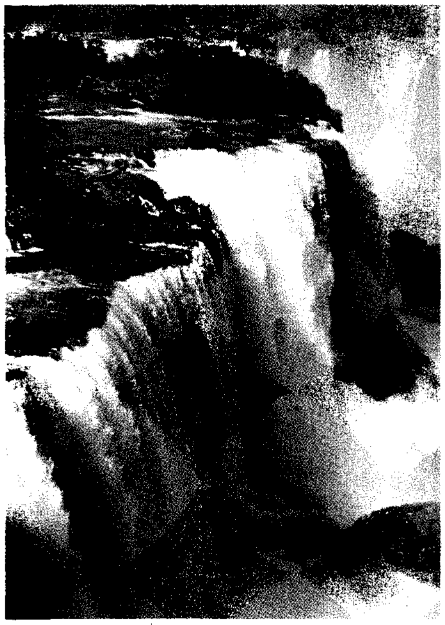
Water approaches Morgan City from every side. The Atchafalaya River and its surrounding floodway come down from the north and pass the western edge of town. The seawall is a part of the floodway's eastern guide levee. When there are heavy local rains, as there were at the time of the great flood of 1973, water that is kept out of the floodway by the seventy-five miles of the eastern guide levee—water that used to go into the swamp and the river when the basin was under the control of nature—pools against the levee, caroms in the direction of the Gulf, and assaults Morgan City from the back side. The levee ends on Avoca Island, five or six miles south. The Atchafalaya floodwaters are sometimes so high that they go around the end of the levee and come back against Morgan City. Hurricanes also bring floods from that direction, surging from the Gulf like tidal waves.

Professor Kazmann, of L.S.U., said, "You can't sell Morgan City short, or I would." To end its days, Morgan City does not require a Design Flood. The Design Flood, at Morgan City, is a million and a half cubic feet per second. LeRoy Dugas, of Old River, once explained to me, "The Old River Control Structures can pass seven hundred and fifty thousand cubic feet per second and the Morganza Spillway six hundred. In that situation, if both of them are wide open, we've got Morgan City gasping for air." The people of Morgan City are not easily frightened. They would tell Professor Kazmann to get back into his college and Dugie to shut a few gates. Mayor Cedric LaFleur says, "I feel safe. I feel secure. We're not going to wash away." If there is a slightly hollow sound as he speaks, it is because Morgan City is sort of like a large tumbler glued to the bottom of an aquarium. The Corps, of course, built Morgan City's great rampart, and graced it with bas-reliefs of shrimp boats and oil rigs—consecutive emblems of Morgan City booms. Everyone is grateful for the wall. Morgan City—in its unusual setting—is dependent on the Corps of Engineers in the way that a space platform would depend on Mission Control. The fate of Morgan City is written at Old River. Anything that happens there is relevant to the town.

As the towboat passes under the second bridge and turns toward a berth below the seawall, I ask General Sands what sort of complaint he most frequently receives when he comes here. He says, "The Corps of Engineers isn't doing enough to protect Morgan City from disaster."

The hearing is at nine the next morning, aboard the Mississippi in the thoroughly transformed lounge. Where Teche-Vermilion was taking pots, the scene is now set for the court-martial of Billy Mitchell. In front of various standing flags, the three generals and two civilian members of the Mississippi River Commission sit at a large formal table, with General Sands in the central position. A colonel is master of ceremonies, and three other colonels are in the front row. This seems an unlikely place for Clifton Aucoin to present his petitions, but now he stands before them—a man in bluejeans and an open shirt, whose remarks suggest that he has spent a good many days of his life up to his hips in water. "My name is Clifton Aucoin," he testifies. "Very few people pronounce it right, so don't feel bad about it." He tells the commission that he once kept a boat tied to the knob of his front door. "As far as us people in the back floodwater area, we feel neglected," he continues. "As far as we can tell, nothing has been fixed. Atchafalaya water just comes around Bayou Chene, it comes right on us backwater people. . . . We feel that it's just another major flood that's waiting to hit us if nothing is done about it." As a hunter, he further complains of dying trees, of disappearing browse and cover—changes no longer ascribable to nature but now quite obviously conceded to be under the control of the Corps.

The commissioners hear Cedric LaFleur, a trimly built man with curly hair and dark, quick eyes. LaFleur says it is "a dire relief" to have the seawall completed, and suggests that the Corps stop studying the Avoca Island levee and extend it several miles south—to prevent the floods of the Atchafalaya from going around the levee's tip and coming back upon the town. Terrebonne Parish, east of



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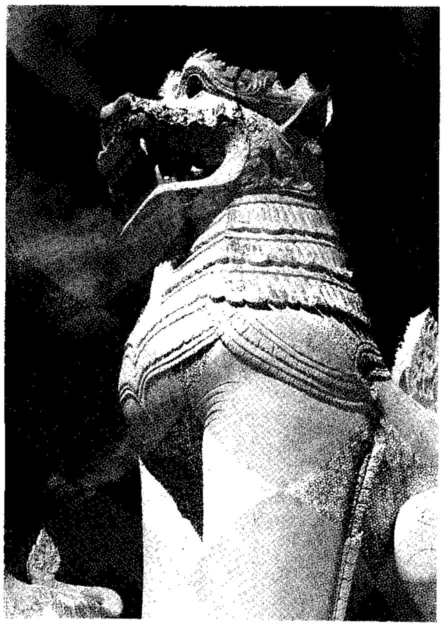

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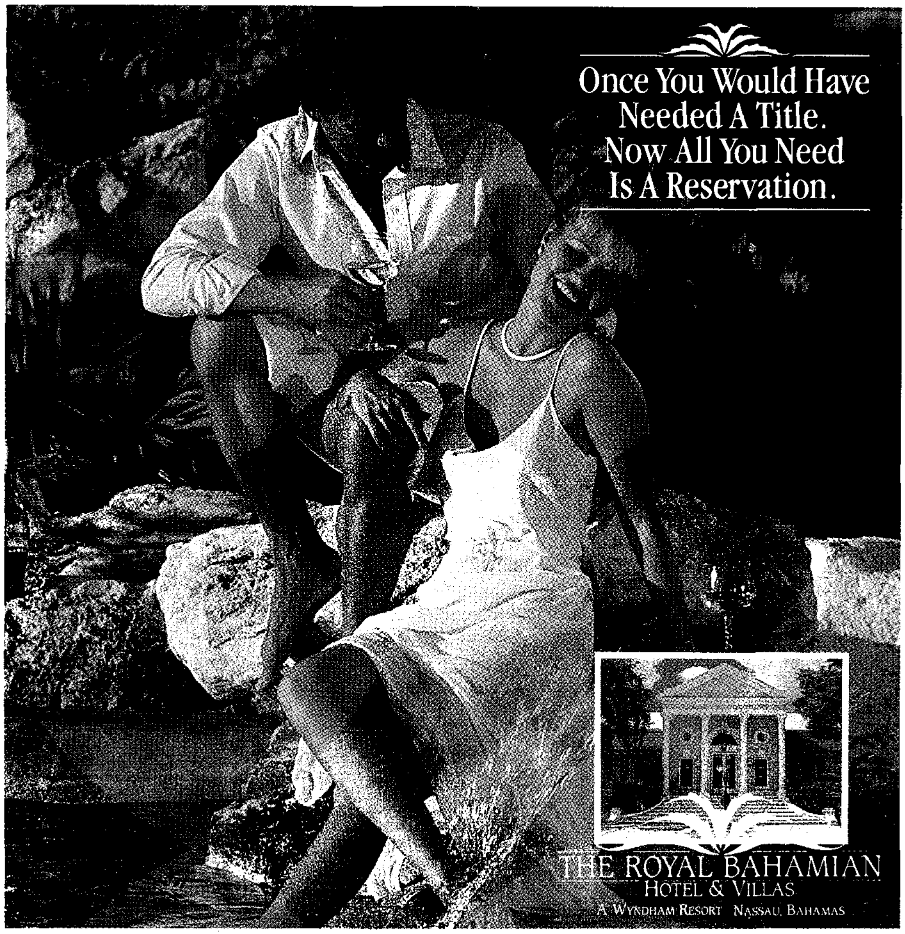
the proposed extension, has complained to the Corps that an extended levee would deprive Terrebonne marshes of sediment, thereby destroying the marshes. The survival of one parish is in conflict with the survival of another, and each is appealing to the Corps.

They hear Mark Denham, of St. Mary Parish: "We appreciate y'all coming down. We really consider having the Corps as a presence in our area a tremendous asset to our area as far as protection of floodwaters and as far as economic development also."

They hear Jesse Fontenot, Curtis Patterson, Gerald Dyson—chambers of commerce, levee boards, the government of the state. And, as they inevitably do in Morgan City, they hear Doc Brownell. He comes forward slowly, slightly stoop-shouldered, septuagenarian. This man once entered prizefights. There is a trace of smile on his face. He, too, thanks the commission. "It's always a pleasure to see you people come down here. It gives us a little encouragement." And then, in effect, he tells the Corps to get its act mobilized and extend the levee. For thirty-two and a half years, Doc Brownell was the mayor of Morgan City. LaFleur has been described as his clone. In 1973, when the water went around the end of the levee and came back up Bayou Chene, Brownell, without authority, sank a fifteen-hundred-ton barge in the bayou. The barge acted as a dam and held off the water long enough for the people to build up their defenses and save the city. "The nightmare of '73 is still with us," Brownell reminds the commission. "We live in a state of apprehension; we live on the whims of the weather of over forty-two per cent of the United States. . . . We live with it twenty-four hours a day." He praises the beauty of the new seawall but points out that to the people of Morgan City its extraordinary height is an unambiguous message from the Corps. "We can expect that much more water. It makes us very apprehensive. We have got to extend our defenses."

Brownell, who went into medicine because the lumber business was dying, became a sort of bayou Schweitzer, delivering babies far out in the swamps, doing surgery in an un-air-conditioned operating room for twelve and fourteen hours a day. Among his closest companions was an alligator called Old Bull, who lived with the Brownell family for thirty-five years. Old Bull died in 1982 and is now in a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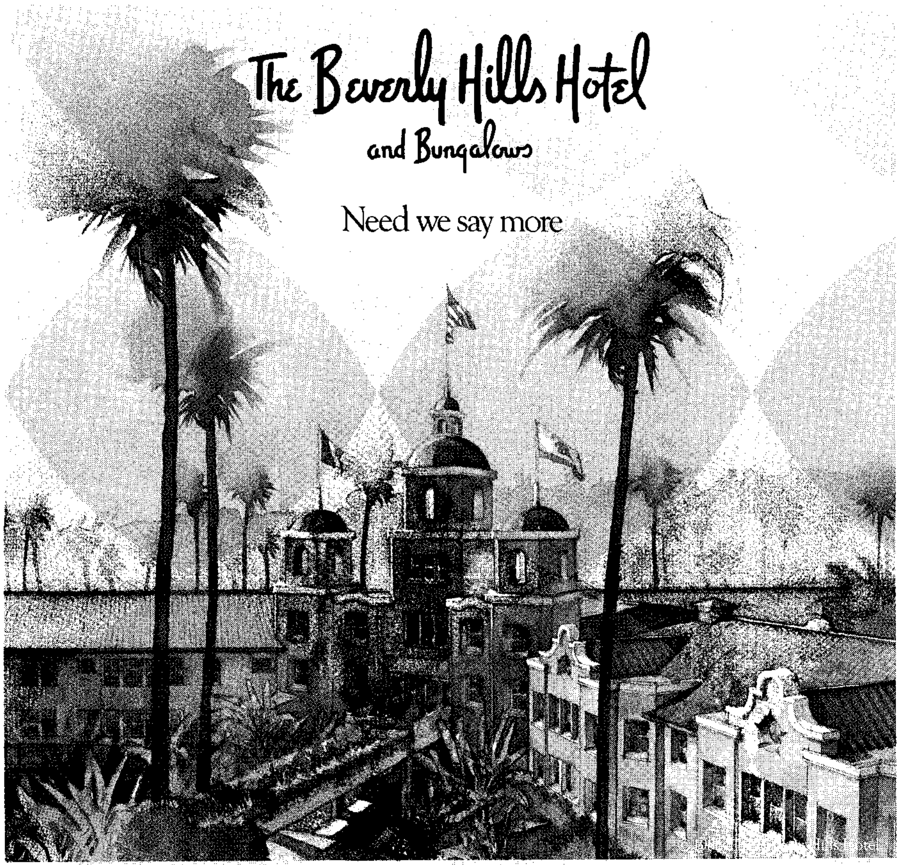

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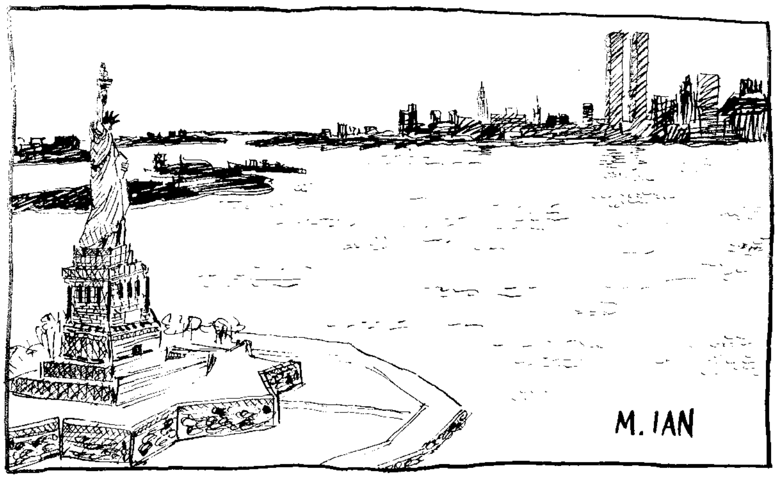
glass-sided mahogany-framed case—in effect, a see-in coffin—looking almost alive among simulated hyacinths, iris, and moss in Brownell's parlor. Tip to tip, Old Bull is ten and a half feet long. There is a brass footrail next to Old Bull and a padded bar above him, with beer tap, soda siphon, and a generous stock of bottles. Brownell took Charlie Fryling and me there one spring day to admire Old Bull and to show us, with the help of pictures, the predicament of Morgan City. What struck me most of all as he talked was his evident and inherent conviction that a community can have a right to exist—to rise, expand, and prosper—in the middle of one of the most theatrically inundated floodplains in the world. To be sure, the natural floodplain is also an artificial floodway—concentrated and shaped—and, accordingly, its high waters are all the more severe. In Morgan City, it has become impossible to separate the works of people from the periodic acts of God. "We have a lot of restaurants now and various types of establishments in places vulnerable to the water," Brownell said. "We got to develop on the floodplain. It's the only place we got to develop. We still have got to look for places for people to live. Now, you can see from this map that we're right in the middle of this floodway. It's like a funnel with a spout, and we're at the end of that spout. We're in the concentration part of it. We have our homes, our families, our whole future in the floodway. We've got to live with these problems—and to me it ought to be some type of priority for the people who live under these conditions twelve months out of the year should be given some type of preference as to what our future is. It's the nation's problem, and we are only the victims here of a lot of things that does happen here that are imposed upon us. We lost the big live oaks in the park because of the long-standing floodwater. A flood doesn't last for weeks here, as it does in some of those northern places. Our floods last for months. The more ring levees are built to the north, the more water Morgan City gets. In whatever way the people upriver protect themselves, they send more water to Morgan City. If people dig canals to get water off their land, it goes to Morgan City. When you're drowning, you don't need more water."

Tarzan of the Apes once leaped about among the live oaks in the park. The first Tarzan movie was filmed in Morgan City. The Atchafalaya swamp was Tarzan's jungle. Black extras in costumes pretended they were Africans.

Not far from Old Bull, the head of another alligator was in use as a lamp—its mouth open, a light bulb in the back of its throat. Stuffed owls and hawks were hanging on the walls, and Canada geese were flying through the air. There were the heads of deer, of black bears from the Atchafalaya swamp. Brownell said his father had killed six bears shortly before he died. There was a stuffed tarpon head as large as the head of a horse. The tarpon was caught in the Atchafalaya River near Morgan City before the river, increasing in volume and power, pushed back the salt water. Islands now stand where the river was a hundred feet deep. As the Atchafalaya has grown, more and more sediments have, of course, come with it, stopping where they reach still water. This is the one place in Louisiana, other than the mouth of the Mississippi, where new coastal land is forming. Large areas of what was once Atchafalaya Bay have become dry flats. The soil broke the surface as the flood receded in 1973. Whole islands appeared at once. The bay was choked. Brownell says the river built a dam there. A geologist would call it a delta.

Charles Morgan, a shipper in New Orleans in the eighteen-fifties and sixties, was so irritated by New Orleans' taxes, New Orleans' dockage fees, and New Orleans' waterfront clutter that he moved his operation to the Atchafalaya and developed a competing city. It seems unlikely that he was aware that the Mississippi River meant to follow him. Morgan City thrived on shipping, on oysters. When the big cypresses were felled in the Atchafalaya swamp, Morgan City became the center of the cypress industry in the United States: numerous sawmills, hundreds of schooners in the port. Brownell's great-grandfather owned a sawmill. In the nineteen-thirties, Captain Ted Anderson, a Florida-based fisherman, was blown off course by a storm, and put in at Morgan City. In the hold of his boat were shrimp of a size unfamiliar in Morgan City—big ones, like croissants, from far offshore. They were considered repulsive, and at first no one wanted them, but these jumbos of the deep Gulf soon gave Morgan City the foremost shrimp fleet in the world. As the Atchafalaya River pushed back the salt water, it pushed out of the marshes the nurseries of shrimp. Caught in the westbound littoral drift, the shrimp went to Texas, where much of the business is now. The growth of cypresses was too slow to keep up with the lumber industry, so the lumber industry collapsed. The next boom was in oil. The big offshore towers come out of the marshlands surrounding Morgan City. They are built on their sides and dominate the horizon like skeletons of trapezoidal blimps. Of the twelve hundred and sixty-three permanent platforms now standing in the Gulf on the continental shelf, eighty-eight per cent are off Louisiana.

In other words, the people of Morgan City are accustomed to taking nature as it comes. Cindy Thibodaux, the town archivist—a robust young poet with cerulean eyes and a fervent manner of speaking—said to me one day, "When you're fishing in the bayou, you're out in nature with the oil industry all around you." She has written a poem about the oil industry and nature from an alligator's perspective.



IN the presence of the tribunes on the towboat, as the Pontchartrain Levee District recites its needs and the State of Louisiana its concerns—as the discussion touches upon the varied supplications of the whole deltaic plain, and on the growth of the extremities of the great levee system not only below Morgan City but down the Mississippi from Bohemia to Baptiste Collette—my mind cannot help drifting back to Old River, where every part of this story in a sense had its beginnings and could also have its end. Near the mouths of the intake channels of Old River Control, the Corps maintains another towboat, smaller than the Mississippi but no less powerful—a vessel on duty twenty-four hours a day and not equipped with white couches, wall-to-wall windows, or venetian blinds—the name of which is Kent.

Kent is a picket boat. It defends Old River Control. With its squared bow and severed aspect, it appears to be a piece of wharf that loosened like a tooth and came out on the river. Kent's job is to catch, hold, and assist any vessel in trouble. If barges break loose upstream and there is insufficient time to tie them up, Kent is supposed to divert them. Technically, it is a twin-screw steel motor tug, eighty-five feet long, with two nine-hundred-horse diesels that can start at the touch of buttons. (Compressed air makes that possible.) It cost two million dollars and differs from most river towboats only in its uncommon electronics—the state and variety of its radar, the applications of its multiple computers. In addition to the on-board radar, two radar beams sweep the river from the bank at stations four miles apart, and anything that reflects from these beams appears on a screen in Kent. If a tow rig is moving at the speed of the current, an alarm goes off, for the coincidental speed suggests that the rig is without power. Kent can tell this eight miles away.

Fifteen miles up the river, in April of 1964, twenty barges full of ore were tied to the bank and left there unattended. Eight of them broke free. There was no picket boat then. As a functioning valve, the control structure at Old River was nine months old. As the ore-laden barges drifted near, they were drawn away from the Mississippi, sucked into the structure by the power of the Atchafalaya. One of them plunged through the gates and sank on the lower side. Three sank in front of the gates and effectively closed the structure. A standard barge is a hundred and ninety-five feet long. Water piled up. Weeks went by. Much of the time, the difference in water level between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya sides was thirty-five feet, a critical number that resulted in damage and "threatened the integrity of the structure"—the Corps' way of saying that it might have been wiped out.

Today, it is illegal to tie anything to either bank of the Mississippi within twenty upstream miles of the structures at Old River. Every approaching vessel has to radio Kent and, as Dugas puts it, "say what he is, who he is, and if he has a red-flag product." And for ignorant river pilots and all uninitiated craft there's a very large sign high up the bank of the river—its first three words in red:

WARNING
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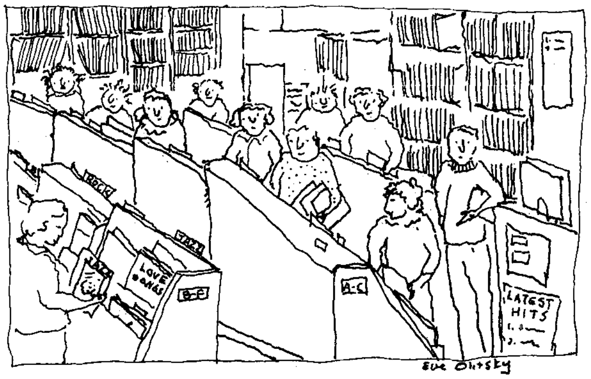
Spring high water often knocks the sign away.

It would be difficult to overestimate the power of the draw, deriving, as it does, from the Atchafalaya, by now, in point of discharge, the seventh-strongest river in the world. The Coast Guard once tried to set five warning buoys in the west side of the Mississippi, but could not keep them in place, because the suction was so fierce. This threat to navigation could be called an American Maelstrom—a modern Charybdis, a Corryvreckan—were it not so very much greater in destructive force. In Dugie's words, "Any rig on the right side of the river is in trouble."

An empty barge and three barges loaded with quarry stones were sucked into the low sill in 1965. Two loaded barges went through the structure and sank on the Atchafalaya side. The other sank against the gates without causing apparent damage, but it must have contributed to the turbulences that even then were undermining the structure. After the great flood of 1973 and the considerable debilitation it disclosed, there was the constant danger that if several loose barges were to block the flow and the difference in water levels were to build to catastrophic proportions nothing could be done about it. One barge spent a flood against the gates in 1974, but the structure survived.

People in Simmesport often refer to Old River Control as "the second locks." John Hughes, the supervisor of Kent and one of its operators, does his best to correct them. "That's not a lock, that's a control structure," he says. And a Simmesport person says, "Well, we was born and raised here, and we call it the second locks." To judge by the amount of traffic erroneously attracted to the control structure, they have a point. A boat comes down the river, takes a right, and heads for Old River Control, thinking that it is Old River Navigation Lock. Usually, the boat is small—a cabin cruiser, or something of the sort—but the mistake has been made by a fifteen-barge tow. Its skipper called in on the radio to the navigation lock, announcing his arrival. The people at the lock replied that they didn't see him. He said, "I'm right here looking at you, I'm coming in." The mistake was corrected just in time.

In 1982, thirty-nine barges broke loose thirteen miles upstream at four in the morning. The whole rig just came apart. Dugie recalls, "He was in a bend of the river. He couldn't maneuver the river. He hit the bank." The picket boat went after the barges. Five other skippers, joining their units together, detached four towboats that came to help. "They could see the picket boat had a lot of problems, trying to catch thirty-nine barges by himself," Dugie says. At 6 A.M., right at the entrance to the intake channel of Old River Control, the last barge was caught. Not even one hit the gates. Two of the thirty-nine were red-flag barges, loaded with petroleum. Later that year, a fifteen-barge rig heading north in the dark swung too close to Old River Control, was drawn off course, and—its engines overmatched by the force of the water—crashed in the sand on the north side of the intake-channel mouth. In 1983, at midnight, a towboat with three jumbo barges lost power at



Black Hawk Point, two miles above the structure. The picket boat caught it before it reached the channel.

The operator on that occasion was Gerald Gillis, whose broad full face and long jet-black hair lend him the look of an Elizabethan page after twenty-five years in Morgan City. He is one of eight men who work Kent—two on a shift. One day, he took me out on the boat with him, running up the river. He said the speed of the Mississippi current ranges from about three knots in low water to six in spring and eight in flood. A rig coming downstream on this September day would be averaging about eight knots. To conserve fuel, the big thirty-five-barge tows like to crawl along just barely ahead of the speed of the river, and that confuses Kent, because the tows could be dead in the water. An example was descending toward us now, called Gale C, shoving thirty-five barges of grain and coal, and much alive in the river, as Gillis learned from his transceiver. While the huge rig was passing by us—really an itinerant island, eight thousand horsepower and a third of a mile long, with its barges in seven ranks of five—he said the rough rule of thumb for fuelling such an enterprise is one gallon per horsepower per day.

Gillis turned on the depth finder. We had come up the Mississippi's east side, and now he swung crosscurrent, heading for the cutbank of the west-convexing bend just above the structures of Old River. As we traversed the Mississippi, the depth, which was being sketched by a stylus on graph paper, dropped steadily and kept on dropping the closer we came to the bank. We were only a few swimming strokes from shore when the depth reached a hundred feet. It was notable that the riverbed was fifty feet below sea level more than three hundred miles from the mouth of the river, but what particularly astounded me was the very great depth so close to the west bank. It showed the excavating force of a tremendous river. The foundations of skyscrapers are rarely that deep. And this was the bend where the water swung off and into Old River Control—a bend armored with concrete where the Mississippi might break free and go to the Atchafalaya. Kent was so close to the bank that it had no room to turn. Gillis backed away.

Twenty years before, a barge that broke loose and was crumpled after

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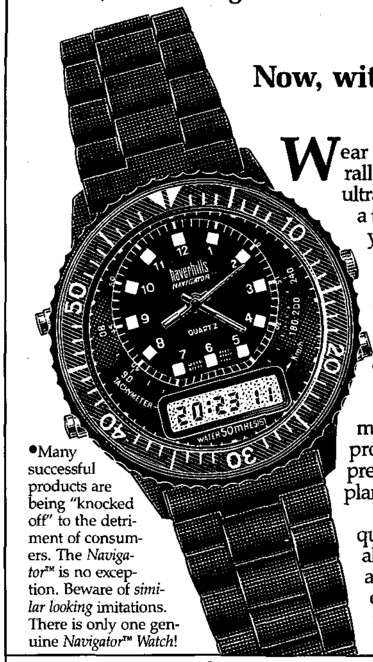

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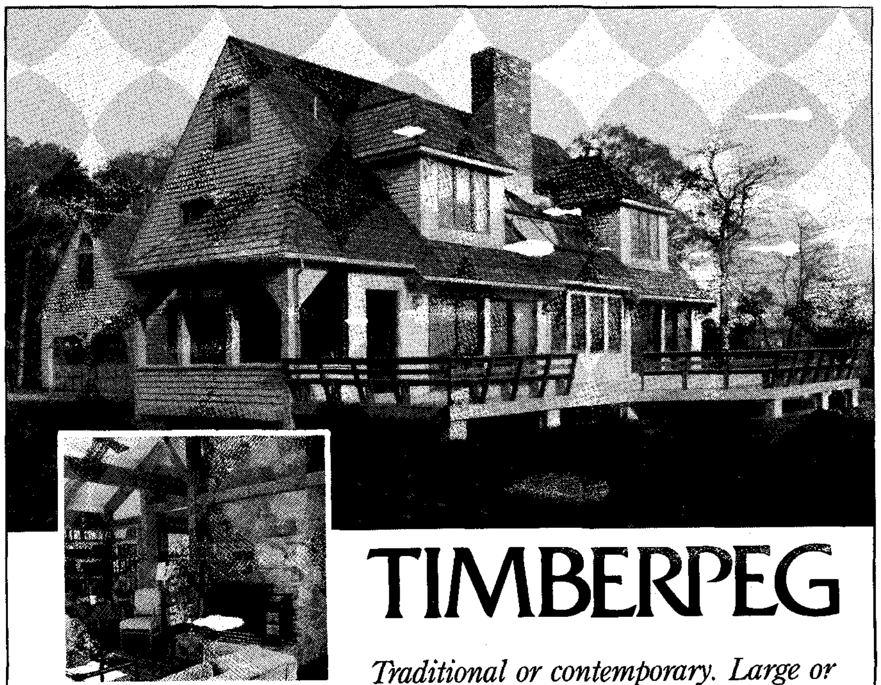

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sinking at the structure was hauled up the intake channel and left by the edge of the river. The barge had not moved since then, but the Mississippi's bank —consumed by the scouring currents —had eroded to the west. The barge now lay five hundred feet out in the Mississippi.

General Sands, reflecting on these matters, once said, "The Old River Control Structure was put in the wrong place. It was designed to a dollar figure."

And Fred Bayley, his chief engineer, added, "That is correct. It was done during the Eisenhower Administration."

The Corps once attempted to barricade the intake channel with a string of barges anchored in the river. Drift —as the big logs are called that unremittingly come down the river— amassed against the anchoring cables until enough had gathered to heave high and start breaking the cables. As if drift were not enough of a problem, ice has been known to appear as well. It may come only once in twenty years, but ice it is, in Louisiana.

The water attacking Old River Control is of course continuous, working, in different ways, from both sides. In 1986, one of the low-sill structure's eleven gates was seriously damaged by the ever-pounding river. Another gate lost its guiding rail. When I asked Fred Smith, the district geologist, if he thought it inevitable that the Mississippi would succeed in swinging its channel west, he said, "Personally, I think it might. Yes. That's not the Corps' position, though. We'll try to keep it where it is, for economic reasons. If the right circumstances are all put together (huge rainfall, a large snowmelt), there's a very definite possibility that the river would divert—go down through the Atchafalaya Basin. So far, we have been able to alleviate those problems."

Significant thanks to Kent.

A skiff rides on Kent's stern. A part of the skiff's permanent equipment is a fifteen-foot bamboo pole. Kent is alert to everything that moves in the river, including catfish. —JOHN MCPHEE

•

BLOCK THAT ME R!

[*From the N -Ledger*]

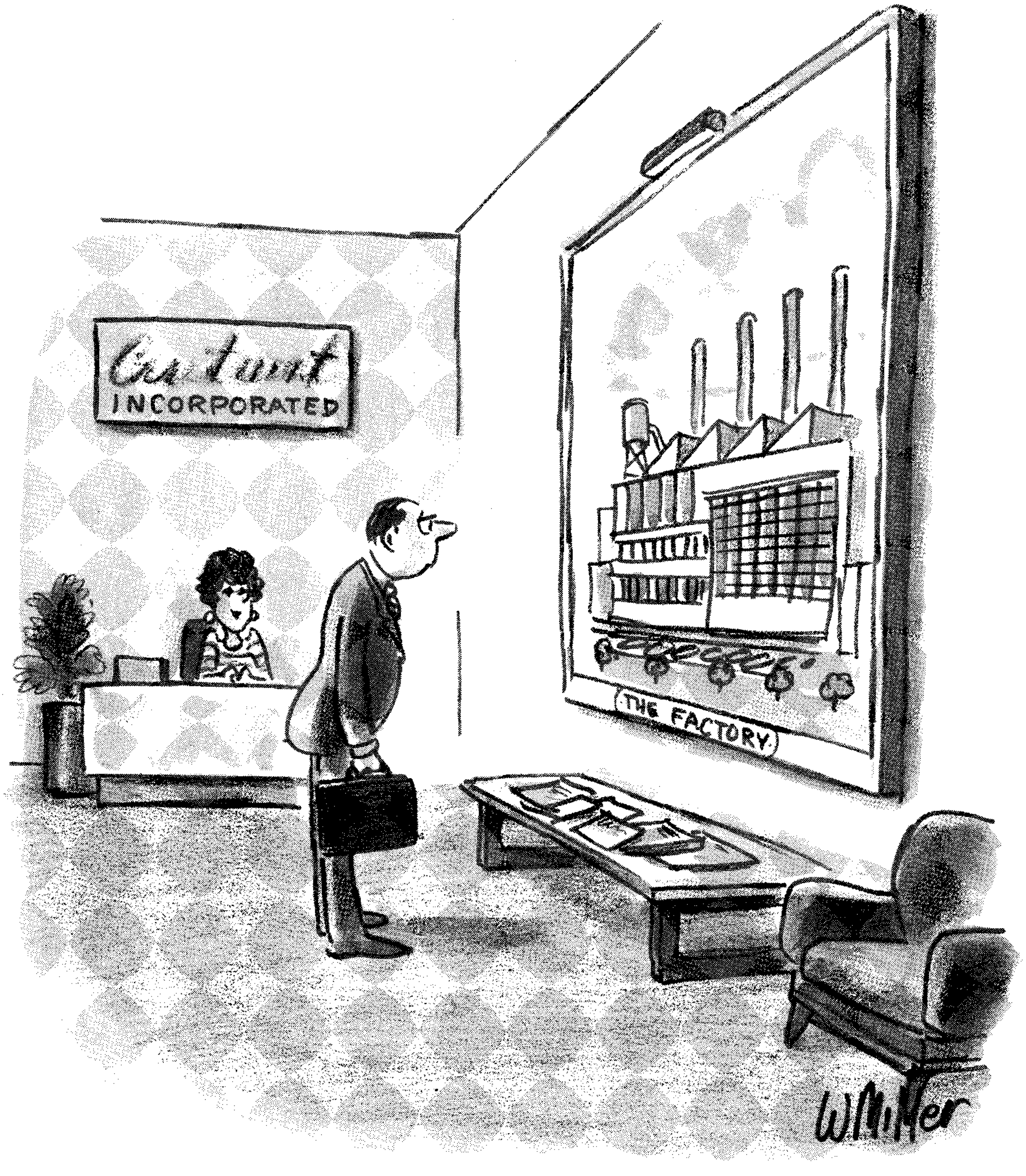
But Sorkow denounced his "scattershot method" of introducing evidence. "Now that you've had a bite of the apple and found you've got a loser coming up," he said about the evidence, "I'm not going to give you a second chance to put your ducks in order."

MUSICAL EVENTS

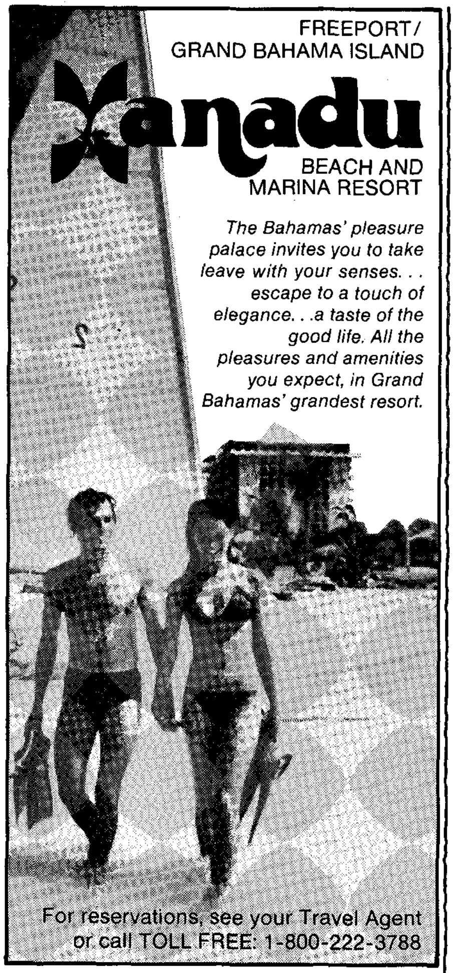
Chamber

THREE weeks after the gala reopening of Carnegie Hall, Carnegie Recital Hall reopened—renamed Weill Recital Hall, to commemorate Joan and Sanford I. Weill's contribution to the Carnegie restoration. Originally, in 1891, Carnegie had three main performance spaces for music: there was the big hall; below it there was what was called the Recital Hall, which held about twelve hundred people; and up on the third floor, beside the big hall, there was the Chamber Music Hall, which could hold, we are told, four hundred and fifty people. There was easy communication between the three. Music was not Carnegie's only concern in those days: the Chamber Music Hall might serve for a dinner, a small ball, or a "wine room" when a grand banquet was being held in the Recital Hall. In 1896, the Recital Hall became a theatre, the home of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and in 1960 it became the Carnegie Hall Cinema. (It has been closed for some time and will reopen this summer, again as a cinema.) The Chamber Music Hall became Carnegie Recital Hall. When I got to know it, about fifteen years ago, it was a rather sad, shabby little place, with noisy ventilation, sagging seats, and a stage that (in the words of last month's Carnegie program book) "gave the hall the look of a suburban community auditorium." One puffed up flights of fire stairs to reach it. (The hydraulic elevators, which served fifteen floors of halls and studios, were useful only to those who arrived good and early.) Before and after concerts, and during intermissions, the only refreshment it offered its guests was a trickle of water. In a city where so much else beckoned, programs of uncommon interest were needed to attract audiences to Carnegie Recital Hall.

But beneath the decay and neglect the good bones of W. B. Tuthill's architecture remained, and in Weill Hall they are again revealed: the pilastered, plaster-panelled, blind-arched walls, the spring of the ceiling from a noble cornice. James Stewart Polshek, the architect of the restoration, has added his own touches. Post-Tuthill accretions—the flimsy false proscenium, curtains, screens—have been cleared from the platform; artists and audience are now together in one elegant chamber. Behind the artists, beneath the encircling cornice, there is a new, shallow Palladian niche, carried on Corinthian columns with gilded capitals. The approach to the hall was redone in 1983, but not well. (The bronze banister, deeply notched, slides unpleasantly beneath one's fingers; molded plaster capitals, split to reveal lights within them, make a shopwindow effect.) The hall itself has been more carefully treated. The new seats—only two hundred and sixty-eight of them (were people much smaller in 1891?)—are at once firm and comfortable. The ventilation has been quieted. (The hall has been overheated at most of my visits; but midwinter Carnegie visitors know they must dress, beneath outer wraps, as if for the tropics.) Three chandeliers—Austrian crystals in bronze frames from Holland—attractively supply a discreet prismatic, polychrome twinkle overhead. There is provision for effective lighting of the artists. (I have not yet seen it in full use.) One regret



"Actually, there's no factory, but it's something, you know, people expect."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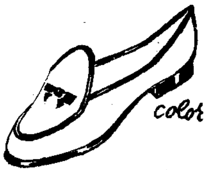
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might be that Weill Hall—like Carnegie Hall itself—has been decorated in conventional cream and gold ("three different shades of creme and application of Dutch Metal for decorative highlighting," in the words of the official handout). Since color wash is cheap—even if painters' wages are high—let us hope that before long both Carnegie Hall and Weill Hall will be warmed with colors more appropriate to their architecture. It might help make them appear smaller. It might even seem to "warm" the sound.

To some extent, audiences tend to "hear" with eyes as well as ears. Philharmonic (now Avery Fisher) Hall never seemed deader than when a navy-blue décor apparently sucked up the sound. (I forget which prima donna it was who gave the advice "Never wear dark blue onstage; it does nothing for the voice.") When Boston's Symphony Hall was repainted about fifteen years ago, there were complaints that the acoustics had been brightened. And it may just be that the gleaming new décors of Carnegie Hall and Weill Hall have enhanced an impression of (especially in the latter) overbright sound. In Weill Hall I have heard so far a string quartet, two singers (one accompanied by piano, the other by harpsichord), and the New Music Consort with a bill that included pieces for percussion trio (Lou Harrison's Fugue), for trombone, percussion, and piano (Charles Wuorinen's Trombone Trio), and for six instrumentalists (Boulez's "Dérive"). I've sat front, back, and middle, left and right, on the main floor, but not, so far, in the balcony. I've found the place lively, immediate, intimate, and have heard nothing (in the words of a colleague) "literally painful" except one earsplitting fortissimo high D from the flute in Elliott Carter's "Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux," in the New Music Consort program. But then flute high D—avoided by earlier composers, brought into prominence and common use by Prokofiev's Classical Symphony—has never been a comfortable note.

Carnegie Recital Hall was primarily a rental hall. Weill Recital Hall is the home of several excellent series—old music, new music, pianists, string quartets, singers—quality-controlled, presented by Carnegie Hall itself. The string quartet I heard was the Kronos, dressed for this appearance in smart, colorful updates of what waiters in the Russian Tea Room next door wear, and with hair short, spiky, and—matching the hall—touched with gilt for decorative highlighting. The place was packed. The players have found a way of drawing people, young and old, to concerts of uncompromisingly serious contemporary music. They play so much of it that it's hard to believe they can play it all well. But they do. I've not heard a Kronos performance that did not sound technically brilliant, thoroughly rehearsed, emotionally committed, and interpretatively cogent. The program was Alfred Shnitke's First Quartet; Aulis Sallinen's Third Quartet; a new work by Ornette Coleman, "In Honor of NASA and Planetary Soloist" (a lively suite in which the quartet was joined by Joseph Celli, playing sometimes an oboe and sometimes the mukavina, a small, pungent Indian shawm); and, after the intermission, Berg's Lyric Suite.

The first singer I heard in the hall was Joan Morris, accompanied by her husband, William Bolcom. Miss Morris is a national treasure, one of the few concert singers left who know how to use words, timing, and timbre to tell a story, create a character, draw a tear, or set listeners smiling. She offered a survey of about ninety years of American song, from Paul Dresser and Harry Von Tilzer to Irving Berlin, Bernstein, and Bolcom. I regretted her decision to concentrate almost entirely on happy or amusing numbers. (Dresser's "On the Banks of the Wabash" was one of the few sad songs of the evening.) Dark scenas in her repertory—the Leiber and Stoller "Tango," the Rodgers and Hart "Ten Cents a Dance," Marc Blitzstein's "Nickel Under the Foot"—have made previous recitals disturbing as well as delightful. I wish she would add songs by Mozart, Schubert, Loewe, and Wolf—in English translation, of course—and songs by Purcell, Haydn, Virgil Thomson, Benjamin Britten, and Ned Rorem to that repertory, for she could do much with them. But wanting still more must not impede praise of what she and Mr. Bolcom did, and in the close, clear acoustics of Weill Hall each subtly shaded word, sudden sparkle of pretty timbre, and pointed comment from the piano told surely.

Julianne Baird, likewise, was deliciously audible, in a program of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music, accompanied by Colin Tilney at the harpsichord and, in Hasse and Handel cantatas, Myron Lutzke's cello. Hearing her soprano in closeup, in a chamber, after hearing it three days earlier soaring through the resonant spaces of the Church of the Holy Trinity made an interesting contrast. More about that, and about some other early-music concerts of merit, later.

Carter's "Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux" is a duo for flute and clarinet, written for Pierre Boulez's sixtieth birthday, in 1985. It is one of three short works (the others are the violin solo "Riconoscenza," for Goffredo Petrassi's eightieth birthday, and the "Canon for 4" honoring William Glock on his retirement as director of the Bath Festival) that turned out to be more than "occasional pieces"—that are, in fact, small, satisfying masterworks. The composer explains the title (in a preface to the score, published by Boosey) as "rough breathing/smooth breathing"—the aspirate or unaspirate approach to an initial vowel or *ρ* in classical Greek. (His apt example is the Greek for "sixtieth year," *ἑξηκοστὸν ἔτος*, transliterated as "hexèkoston etos.") The work begins and ends with a four-note motto drawn from letters in the name Boulez which, in German or French, can identify notes: B, U(t), L(a), E—or, in English usage, B-flat, C, A, E. "B, U," the flute cries roughly; "L, E," the clarinet continues, smoothly. Playing anagrams, the flute proposes "U, E," smoothly; "L, B," the clarinet cries, roughly. Other teasing possibilities cross one's mind: Boulez's music is published by Universal Edition, commonly referred to as U.E.; the initials "E.C." are also embedded in the motto. But what one hears is a captivating, lively dialogue. Sometimes Fiordiligi and Dorabella are recalled, as one singer holds a long note while the other spins melody; then they change roles. There are passages as of bright, shapely bird song. There is a tiny, lovely slow movement at the heart of the work. Everywhere there is bubbling, unlabored, lovable invention. The piece was given its New York première, by Rachel Rudich, flute, and Robert Yamins, clarinet, playing from a single lectern; their performance was attractive and accomplished. The New York deuxième is due at the Speculum Musicae concert in Merkin Hall on March 9th.

"Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux" was followed, appropriately, by Boulez's popular "Dérive," another work writ-

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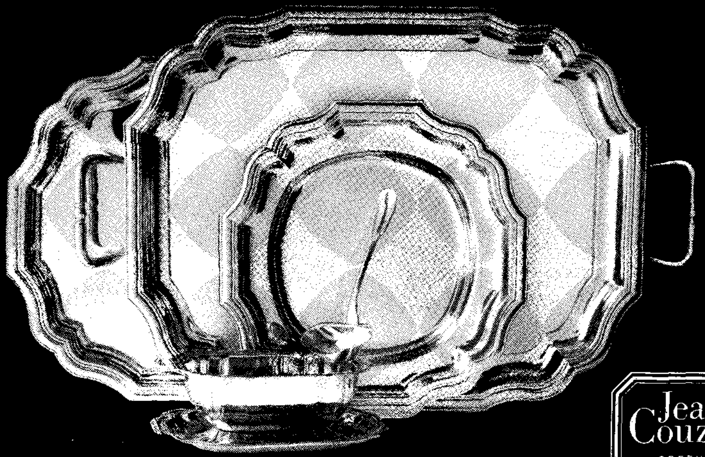

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ten to honor William Glock and his achievements. (There were no program notes.) Earlier in the program, Wuorinen's Trombone Trio had its New York deuxième; it was first performed by Parnassus, in Merkin Hall, last November. If memory serves rightly, the same trombonist, Ronald Borror, played out more exuberantly in Merkin, and now tempered his tones to the smaller space. On both occasions, the work, with its big spans of melody and energetic, intricate rhythms, made a fine, vigorous impression. But Weill Hall certainly does need handling with care.

CARNEGIE restorations will not be complete until Cesar Pelli's sixty-story skyscraper has risen on the narrow lot between the hall and the Russian Tea Room. Its first seven stories are to be devoted partly to Carnegie—providing the audience with the ample, convenient approaches, public spaces, refreshment rooms, hat-and-cloak rooms that it still lacks. (The "new" Carnegie Hall is proving to be even harder to get into and out of than the old.) When the attingent skyscraper has been built, there will no doubt be doors from the Weill Hall platform into a space where an unwanted grand piano can be wheeled. At the moment, the piano has to remain onstage, a looming, anachronistic presence at old-music concerts, a black hippopotamus attending a dance of duikers. (Perhaps until the new building is ready it should be painted "creme," with gilded highlights. I'm assured that a paint job on a piano does not affect its tone.) Mr. Pelli has an exciting assignment: to add to the nineteenth-century hall what a twentieth-century audience needs. It would be good to learn that he has arranged to rehouse Patelson's—the busy music store across the street from Carnegie's stage door—in his building, in a space linked with and open to preconcert and postconcert gathering places, so that Carnegie Hall and Weill Hall audiences, eating and drinking, discussing what they are about to hear or have just heard, will be able to buy the relevant scores, records, music magazines, and books about composers.

—ANDREW PORTER

•

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THE THEATRE

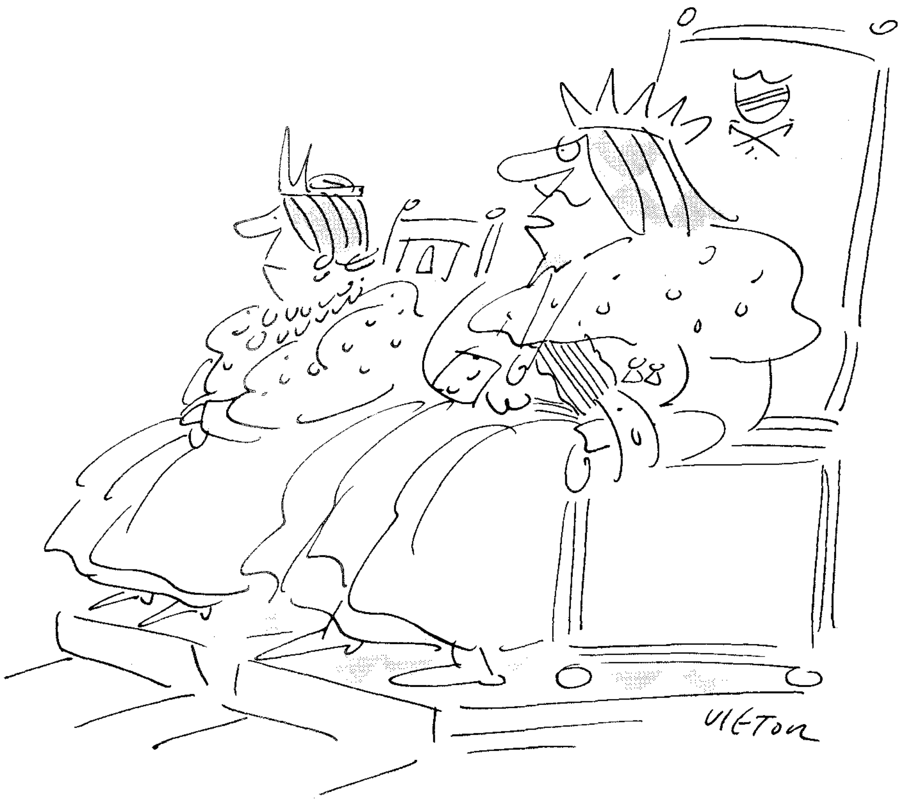
Moms

"Moms," by Alice Childress, at the Hudson Guild, is a celebration of the great Jackie (Moms) Mabley, or, to quote the subtitle, "A Praise Play for a Black Comedienne." Raffish, frisky, and blissfully low, Moms was born in 1894 and died in 1975, and her professional life, in minstrel shows and vaudeville and clubs and halls and theatres, and eventually on television with Mike Douglas and Merv Griffin, constituted a history of black comedy in America. Black comedy in America, back to the days of slavery, has been, perforce, black in more than one sense. In the title role, Clarice Taylor gives a clever impersonation and manages to encompass that history in one routine after another, in one scene after another, splicing it all together with jokes and throwaway lines. The routines and jokes, presumably Mabley's own material, are very funny—not a dud among them—and the scenes, Miss Childress's contribution, are firm and telling. Her play—for indeed it is a play—is written with considerable tact, with just enough story to keep things moving and varied and to display the best of Moms' wares. There are two performers besides Miss Taylor: Grenoldo Frazier, as Luther, her accompanist and lover pro tem, and S. Epatha Merkerson, as her maid-companion, Adele. (All three performers play a number of other roles.) Mr. Frazier is a fine jazz pianist and Miss Merkerson a good singer, but it is Miss Taylor—Moms—who prevails, with her rough, baggy costumes and her commentary, so humorous and wry and sophisticated, and always, implicitly or overtly, about black and white. My favorite scene is a visit to Harlem, in Moms' Rolls-Royce, with Luther precariously at the wheel, for purposes of shopping for soul food and renewing old acquaintance; the circumstances, the sights are grim, but the spirit is sturdy and gleeful. The songs—music and lyrics by Nathan Woodard and Miss Childress—are effective as sung by all, and especially as played by Mr. Frazier. The useful, all-purpose setting was designed by Rosario Provenza and lighted by Robert Wierzel; Judy Dearing's costumes are very good, Miss Taylor's sprung wardrobe particularly so.

Arthur Miller's two one-acters, presented under the collective title "Danger: Memory!" at the Mitzi E. Newhouse, don't amount to much. In the first of them, "I Can't Remember Anything," an elderly Connecticut widow comes to dinner, as one gathers she does quite often, at the house of her elderly neighbor, a few hundred yards down the road from her own house. She spends a great deal of time deploring her loss of memory, and he his inability to concentrate on the architectural calculations he is doing for a friend. Both are discouraged about their lives and about the state of the world. We learn that her life came to a virtual stop after the death of her husband, more than ten years before, and that she is out of touch with her son, a musician now living in India. She drinks quite a number of Scotch-and-waters. Then she decides to play a record that her son has sent her, and both of them recognize the music, through its Indian disguise, as an old-fashioned samba. They remember that, all right, and dance. If the play offers anything other than the pleasure of Geraldine Fitzgerald's and Mason Adams' company, I missed it.

"Clara" opens with a man who appears to be in his sixties spread-eagled on the floor. He is not dead but in shock, having discovered the body of his brutally murdered daughter, a social worker in her twenties. During the rest of the play (exercise?), he is grilled by a police detective, who tries to force him to remember any of Clara's associates, any possible suspects. We learn that she had been seeing a young Puerto Rican ex-convict, and that her father did not think much of the idea but, being a professed liberal, refused to warn her or interfere. He is too unstrung even to remember the young man's name—he claims. Then suddenly, in a sort of dream, he recalls an episode that took place during the Second World War, involving a clash between black troops stationed in a Southern town and the local white citizenry—a preposterous episode, I think—just in time to snap the young man's name into his mind and bring down the curtain. (There is no curtain at the Newhouse.) "Clara" is about guilt, racism, racial hypocrisy, sexual hypocrisy, and other abstractions. It is certainly not about people; the two main characters are barely sketched in. Nevertheless, Kenneth McMillan (father) and James Tolkan (detective) manage to give them flesh and blood and the semblance of breath. Gregory Mosher was the director of both plays. The appropriate settings were designed by Michael Merritt and lighted by Kevin Rigdon.

—Edith Oliver



"Frankly, I can't tell one duke from another."

THE SKY LINE

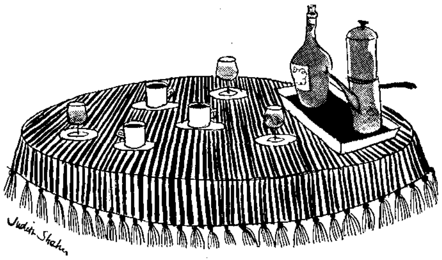
Prospectus

WE were writing about architecture in this magazine within a few weeks of its founding, and The Sky Line began appearing regularly in the fall of 1926. The magazine was less than two years old; its pages were few, its hopes boundless. With an ambitiousness based in part upon knowing no better and in part upon a panicky determination to succeed at a moment when many people were predicting that it would fail, the magazine strove to cover the greatest possible number of local activities; along with such surviving departments as Profiles, The Theatre, and Musical Events, there were others headed Polo, Motors, and Tables for Two. Still, it must have been astonishing for readers to find in a small weekly magazine devoted to being funny and informative a department on architecture, called The Sky Line; even more astonishing was the seriousness with which, from the start, the task of architectural criticism was undertaken. As far as I know, no other general-interest magazine in the country was then attempting to deal with the subject on a regular basis. To this day, architectural criticism—even in magazines that claim to have architecture as their chief concern—is a neglected topic.

Back in 1926, many of the articles in the magazine were signed by pseudonyms, imitating the practice of *Punch* and other humor magazines. The signature on The Sky Line was T-Square, and behind T-Square was an architect, writer, and bon vivant named George S. Chappell. He was then forty-nine years old—a good-looking man with merry blue eyes, whom I came to know a short while before he died, in 1946. Chappell was a friend of Robert Benchley, Don Marquis, Heywood Broun, Donald Ogden Stewart, Frank Sullivan, Marc Connelly, and other well-known humorous writers of the period. A convivial group, they spent a lot of their time in speakeasies, as writers were expected to do in those days. It was said of Chappell that he was funnier even than Benchley, and Benchley appears to have agreed with this opinion.

When he began The Sky Line, Chappell was already much admired for his comic writings; they included a book called "My Northern Exposure," which purported to be an account of the discovery of the North Pole by the distinguished Arctic explorer Dr. Traprock. Along with his writings and revels, Chappell was busily practicing architecture in an office at Fortieth Street and Park Avenue. Despite his jesting nature, he was in earnest when sitting in judgment on his fellow-architects, and the acerbity of his comments in his very first Sky Line caused something of a sensation. The opening paragraph began: "Apparently in many building operations the cost of construction leaves nothing over for the design." ("Apparently" was disingenuous, since Chappell was well aware of the relationship between cost and design; the adverb may have been intended to disguise the fact that the author was an architect.) Chappell went on:

> This is particularly noticeable at present in our midtown section, the area of taste and luxury in which the hotels, by and large, maintain a high architectural standard. But some of the new office buildings are terrible. If you like being harrowed stroll about the neighborhood of the Grand Central and give a look.
>
> At Fortieth and Madison is the Murray Hill Building, the side elevation of which presents one of the most atrocious systems of fenestration these eyes have ever beheld. There is not the slightest relation between the ground-floor openings and those above. Piers hit or miss—generally miss—the superstructure so that large portions of the brickwork are apparently carried on plate glass. The engineers, who *must* have designed the building, may claim that actually any relation of openings is a false idea since the façades of a steel building are a mere veneer, hung on the framework. This is true if we choose to be purely practical and scrap esthetics, a condition from which God save us!
>
> Another disappointment on proud Fifth Avenue, at Forty-fourth Street, is the Delmonico Building [now known simply as 535-537 Fifth Avenue], for the design of which H. Craig Severance claims responsibility in letters which cause older members of the profession, wending their way luncheonward at the Century Club, to burst into tears. They do not look at the building itself. They can't. Every proportion appears to be unfortunate. The central tower, curiously set on no particular axis, has the grace of an overgrown grain elevator. Of the detail one of the profession said, "Isn't it curious how a simple element like a band-course or a molding can produce a feeling of nausea?"



Later in his first column Chappell found reason to damn the Fred F. French Building, on the northeast corner of Forty-fifth Street and Fifth Avenue, and to praise the new Aeolian Hall building, on the northeast corner of Fifty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue (currently occupied by Gucci and still one of the loveliest buildings in the city), the Ritz Tower, the New York Athletic Club, and the Cartier clock—sound appraisals all. As was to be anticipated, the damnings were more talked of than the praisings; the gored roared, and the loudest of the roars must have been emitted by Mr. Severance, the unlucky designer of the Delmonico Building. Well over a year later, The Sky Line contained one of those paragraphs of near-apology that are commonly elicited by somebody's having sued, or threatened to sue, for libel. With obvious reluctance, Chappell wrote:

> We learn that Mr. H. Craig Severance, the architect of the Delmonico Building at Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street, was offended by a paragraph which we wrote upon that building when it was nearing completion a year or more ago. A rereading of our words brings the conclusion that we were, perhaps, unreasonably sharp in our comments and, what is more important, too pointedly personal.... We wish to clear our conscience by saying that we did not intend to be personal nor to cast any reflection upon the professional attainments of Mr. Severance whom, although we have not the pleasure of his acquaintance, we know to be one of the leading architects of the city.

After five years and sixty-two Sky Lines, Chappell's T-Square gave way to the simple initials L.M., which stood for Lewis Mumford. (The use of pseudonyms and initials became less common soon afterward, and Mumford came to sign his full name.) In 1931, with the Great Depression worsening and the profession of architecture reaching an almost total standstill, the only structures worth writing about were those that had been started before the stock-market crash of October, 1929. Mumford's first column was devoted mostly to the George Washington Bridge, which Mumford took care to note was "sheer engineering, and such architectural treatment as has been planned for the bridge proper would probably only take away from its present beauty." Mumford, now in his ninety-second year and living in retirement in Amenia, New York, was already well known in the nineteen-thirties as the author of a biography of Herman Melville and of two studies of American culture, "Sticks and Stones" and "The Brown Decades." (So far he has written some thirty books, several of the most recent of which are autobiographical.)

"Excuse me, but was that 'to wit' or 'to woo'?"

• •

A tall, handsome man, with a bald head, a big nose, and extraordinary penetrating eyes, Mumford has succeeded in playing two roles at once—the rigorous scholar, working away on his manuscripts in a modest country retreat (and literally cultivating a garden that Voltaire cultivated only as a metaphor), and the intellectual as a man of action, speaking his mind on popular issues in a fashion that has often cost him popularity. I wrote of Mumford once that among the distinguished men and women I have met in my lifetime he was the only one to whom I would risk applying the word "noble." In his writings upon architecture in general and upon the city in particular, he mitigates the grimness of the facts of history by a tempered evangelism—the civilization that man has achieved so far is radically imperfect but (by means that Mumford the historian keeps Mumford the prophet from dealing with in specific detail) perfectible.

In his Sky Lines, Mumford was every bit as outspoken as Chappell but more polite. When in column after column he excoriated the plans for the United Nations drawn up by a consortium of architects working under the chairmanship of Wallace K. Harrison, he always took care to speak of Harrison's outstanding abilities. When Rockefeller Center went up, Mumford criticized it sharply. "The mice have labored," he wrote, "and they have brought forth their mountain. Like most of the things that were conceived during the last days of the boom, the central building is very big. And when one has said this, one has said almost everything. Shall we leave it at that—or shall we dwell on the holes and the little scratchy tooth marks the mice have left in their cheese?"

In the thirty-odd years during which Mumford wrote The Sky Line (and during which other mice gave birth to other mountains, causing him to think somewhat better of Rockefeller Center), he confronted again and again the vexing question of the relationship between architecture and morality. If architecture is an art, then it is surely an impure one, always at the mercy of clients whimsical or tyrannical, and still more at the mercy of money, notoriously the enemy of art. But the impurity of architecture is its doom, its fate, its "given." Another and much graver problem invariably presents itself—one that its sister arts are assumed not to be obliged to face. The practice of architecture implies moral decisions as well as aesthetic ones, and Mumford would never let architects and city planners (and architectural critics as well) forget that they bore, and were expected to bear, this heavy burden.

In a celebrated critique of Jane Jacobs' "The Death and Life of Great American Cities," Mumford described himself as a born and bred New Yorker, "who in his time has walked almost every street in Manhattan, and who has lived in every kind of neighborhood and in every type of housing, from a private row house on the West Side to an Old Law dumbbell railroad flat." He found Mrs. Jacobs' diagnosis of New York City's problems simplistic and her proposed cure still more so. She disregards, he says,

> the increasing pathology of the whole mode of life in the great metropolis, a pathology that is directly proportionate to its overgrowth, its purposeless materialism, its congestion, and its insensate disorder—the very conditions she vehemently upholds as marks of urban vitality. That sinister state manifests itself not merely in the statistics of crime and mental disorder but in the enormous sums spent on narcotics, sedatives, stimulants, hypnotics, and tranquillizers to keep the population of our "great" cities from coming to terms with the vacuous desperation of their daily lives and with the even more vacuous horrors that their rulers and scientific advisers seem to regard as a reasonable terminus for the human race.

He ends his indictment of the book with a characteristic repudiation of the status quo and a bold summons to a better life:

> If our urban civilization is to escape progressive dissolution, we shall have to rebuild it from the ground up. Certainly we shall have to do far more than alter street plans, humanize housing projects, and give wider geographic distribution to economic activities. Since such a general transformation will affect every aspect of life, urban politics and planning must play an active and significant part. But it is the formative, stabilizing, coherent, order-making forces, not the dynamic ones, that need special encouragement. One cannot control destructive automatisms at the top unless one begins with the smallest units and restores choice and initiative to them—to the person as a responsible human being, to the neighborhood as the primary organ not merely of social life but of moral behavior, and finally to the city as an organic embodiment of the common life, in ecological balance with other cities, big and little, within the larger region in which they lie.

It was nearly twenty-five years ago that Mumford wrote those words, and

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to this day they remain an unrealized—but not, he would insist, an unrealizable—program. In resuming The Sky Line, I take Mumford's program as a sort of manifesto, all the more worth championing because the New York that he has observed and cherished and deplored for almost a full century is in a far more perilous condition today than it has been at any other time in the half century—compared with Mumford, I should say the mere half century—that I, too, have been observing and cherishing and deploring it. Sometimes by carelessness but more often by misguided calculation, the present administration has been giving the city away, in some cases to criminals and near-criminals; zoning laws that have been on the books for seventy years are supplanted by something known as "spot" zoning, which is the equivalent of no zoning at all. When the Planning Commission is active, it is dangerous, encouraging development in neighborhoods that do not require it by increasing the rewards to developers who do not deserve them; when the Planning Commission is passive, it is still more dangerous, rubber-stamping projects that increase the tax base and simultaneously take away such indispensable amenities as our light, air, and elbowroom. At every turn, Mumford's "city as an organic embodiment of the common life" is being obliterated.

It is to this wanton and ever-accelerating destruction of New York in the name of improving it that I will be addressing myself in part; I intend also to have something to say about the nature of architecture as it is practiced here, if, indeed, what is being practiced here can be called architecture. Nor would I wish to be thought to be making a feeble jape at the expense of the architectural profession when I set down that tiny, mighty "if." What an architect does, both aesthetically and (I would suggest) morally, is a serious matter—no matter more serious, since we are all individually and collectively implicated in its consequences. So far am I from making a jape that I would like to record here my own view of the art of architecture—a view that many people (including many architects) would perhaps consider an exaggeratedly lofty one.

To begin with, architecture is an art that has little or nothing to do with anything as simple as shelter. The tremendous trifle of keeping the weather off us is the task of the science of construction, which architects are supposed to know a good deal about but which they rarely pay much attention to. Indeed, the greater the architect the less likely he is to worry about being practical, which is why his roofs leak, his cantilevers sag, and his cornices fall off and kill innocent passersby. The art of architecture is neither practical nor rational; on the contrary, it is essentially irrational, having to do, whether openly or covertly, with the ceremonial, which is to say with the sacred; and what we perceive as sacred is, and must be, beyond reasonableness, if not beyond reason.

That crotchety English anthropologist of a few decades ago Lord Raglan, great-grandson of the Lord Raglan who fought so incompetently in the Crimea and after whom the raglan sleeve is named, was the man who opened my eyes to the robust and necessary irrationality of architecture. In one of his witty, muckraking books he pointed out that all histories of architecture begin by making the same error, which is to claim that nothing could have been more natural for early man than to have developed the art of architecture out of his need for shelter. Raglan compares this sample of seeming common sense with the seeming common sense that argues that early man developed the hat in order to protect his head from rain and the bed in order to provide a comfortable place in which to sleep. He points out that in some of the rainiest climates on earth the hat is entirely unknown and that few cultures besides our own have ever invented the bed. The hat, Lord Raglan persuasively argues, is a form of crown, and therefore an emblem of kingship; the bed is a form of throne and equally an emblem of kingship, or, at the least, an outward and visible sign of superiority over the plebs.

In the same way, the house, studied under the aspect of architecture, can be seen at once to be something far more than merely a device for keeping us snug. It is a sacred place, reserved in the most distant reaches of history for gods and later for kings, who are a lesser (and less amusing) form of divinity, and finally permitted to the rest of us, who no longer consciously feel the force of its mythic origins. And so much the worse for us, failing in our ignorance to receive the emotional reassurance that architecture as an art is supposed to provide us with. For to the extent that we have forgotten the sacred nature of architecture we are simply the more or less contented, the more or less frustrated, beneficiaries of the building industry.

Indissolubly joined to architecture is fashion, which has no more to do with common sense than architecture has. They are equally irrational and equally irresistible, and for the same unreasonable reason: they offer us the promise that any change seems to imply. (One thinks of Tennyson's defense of change as being necessary "lest one good custom should corrupt the world.") Nor should this happiness be dismissed for being based on something so apparently insubstantial as fashion. Fashion is not insubstantial, though it is fleeting and unpredictable; it is as hard as steel and not to be eluded by timidity on our part, much less by our adopting a touch-me-not air of superiority to it. We do not embrace fashion; fashion embraces us. Historians of dress are not embarrassed by this fact, nor, for that matter, are historians of horticulture. (Flowers go in and out of fashion; double dahlias are not to be spoken of in polite society today.) Architectural historians should be capable of an equal equanimity in its presence. The fact is that what we perceive to be fashion is, under many disguises, a secularization of what I have called the sacred, and it is by no means surprising that we consent again and again and so quickly to its domination. Behind all the changing fashions in architecture that we have had flung in our faces here in New York City from one decade to the next and that we at first struggle against and then consent to (and, I would argue, are right to consent to), the grandly primordial fact of a sacredness immanent in the act of building emerges and justifies our otherwise silly and sheeplike pursuit of novelty.

In spite of all our misgivings about the so-called built environment of New York City, with its incessant putting up and throwing down, its brutal self-betrayals in pursuit of gain, it is at the very least an embodiment of that sacredness, which I maintain we all seek whether consciously or unconsciously, and which, concealed by the ever-changing masks of fashion, nourishes us and makes us happy. And this embodiment, in however mutilated a form, is what I dare to call architecture. It is what, following Chappell and Mumford, I am eager to examine and pass judgment on.

—Brendan Gill

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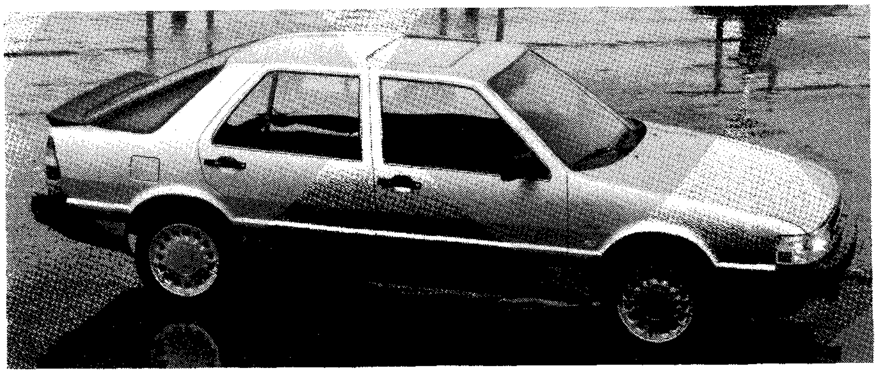

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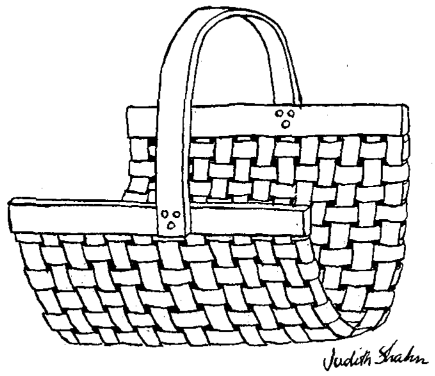
EVERY so often, you're watching a movie about ordinary, deprived, unlucky people and something numinous happens and they're no longer ordinary. You may feel that transformation at De Sica's "Umberto D." and "Miracle in Milan," at early Fellini, and at the work of the Taviani brothers. You may feel it at Jacques Demy's "Lola" and Hector Babenco's "Pixote." It's as if the characters' souls became magically visible, and when that happens the movie becomes piercingly close to you. You feel protective of it, and momentarily alienated from people who don't respond as you do.

So it's not a good idea to see "The Hour of the Star" with the wrong companions. A lot of the scenes don't quite work, but the transforming power of art is very strong in this movie, a first feature by the Brazilian Suzana Amaral, the mother of nine, who, at the age of fifty-two, shot it in four weeks, in 1985, for $150,000. Amaral didn't suddenly turn primitive moviemaker. She's from a family that is well known in the arts, and though she had quit college to marry she began to study film at the University of São Paulo when she was in her late thirties, and she worked in television and made more than forty documentaries and short films before coming to this country and enrolling in the graduate program at New York University film school, where she took a master's degree in 1978. She's a knowledgeable artist, and it's so rare for anyone to attempt what she's trying for here that I can feel myself wanting to overpraise the results. What I can say with honor is that at moments the picture comes very close to the effects achieved by De Sica and the others.

Working from a script that she and Alfredo Oroz adapted from the 1977 novella by Clarice Lispector, Amaral tells the story of Macabéa (Marcelia Cartaxo), a nineteen-year-old orphan from a depressed rural section in the northeast, a girl with no skills or education—without looks or personality, or even training in keeping herself clean—who comes south to São Paulo, a city of fourteen million. It wouldn't occur to this girl that the world could be changed; she probably wouldn't notice if it were. She barely knows what people are saying to her: her dialect is different from theirs. She lives in a rented room in the slums with three other girls, all named Maria; she absorbs trivia from radio shows, goes to her job as a typist, and mimics the behavior of her co-worker Gloria (Tamara Taxman), a veteran of the dating wars, whose five abortions are her battle stripes. Macabéa apologizes politely to her boss for her hopelessly inept one-finger typing, for the smudges on the paper and the holes she makes; he can't bring himself to fire her. So she hangs on. The distance between her timid, passive existence and her fantasy life is so vast as to set off poetic reverberations. Wrapped in the isolation of ignorance, she doesn't think about things like improving her typing; she simply wants to be a movie star.

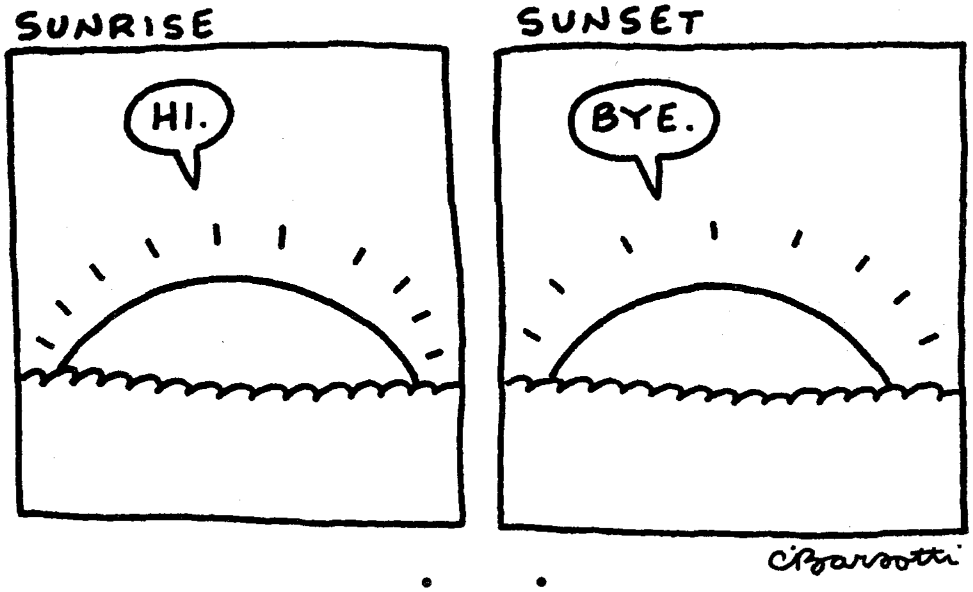
Amaral has been quoted as saying, "My film is not a feminist film; it's a feminine film." And that's what gives it its special qualities of heartbreak and revelation. It's as if "Umberto D." had concentrated not on the old professor but on the young servant girl. It's like a fuller version of the story of the Sicilian girl killed by the German soldiers in "The Night of the Shooting Stars." Amaral has taken a character who might be considered far more marginal than either of those girls, put her at the center of our attention, and made us feel what it's like for her when she looks at men with hopeful interest, trying to make eye contact with them. Later, we feel what it's like for her when she's dating Olimpico (José Dumont), a vain—and mean—metalworker, who's almost as ignorant as she is but puts her down because he's embarrassed that he can't get a snappier girlfriend. He's the sort of man who turns nasty when a woman asks questions he doesn't know the answers to. Macabéa has a little of Gelsomina (from "La Strada") in her. When she sings an aria that she's heard on the radio, Olimpico hits her on the head because it annoys him and then lifts her high in the air, gyrating with her; he's playing the strongman, just like the brute Zampanò.



Macabéa is clumsier than Gelsomina, heavier-spirited; she seems more enduring. She's devastated, though, when she experiences a betrayal. Macabéa has hooded eyes, and when she suffers they become the eyes of a forest creature at bay: she loses all hope. Gloria, who has thoughtlessly betrayed her, tries to square things by paying for her to go to Madame Carlota (Fernanda Montenegro), a *macumbeira*—an illegal witch doctor/fortune-teller—whose flashy old-whore makeup and bangles seem to lend color to Macabéa. The *macumbeira*, who is fascinated by the girl's innocence, gives her ready-made dreams, and the film completes its trajectory from neorealism to magic realism. Like "Umberto D.," "The Hour of the Star" has moments of uncanny humor and painful intuition, but at the end it has a plunging happiness that is inseparable from horror. The hallucinatory effect seems somewhat alien to Amaral's temperament; she's better at the plain, level scenes—they have a truer magic. Still, this Latin-American mash of dreams and reality and American advertising art and images from the movies—a vision similar to what you get from Manuel Puig's novels—has an awkward, mystic sanctity. All the moldy colors seem to come together and to be struck by sunshine. It's contrived with too much trickery (flash-forwards and slow motion), yet it's affecting.

Visually, the movie has a trancelike quality right from the start, when Macabéa, looking in a mirror, moves her hands over her face, as if connecting the sense of touch with the image. As the unloved girl, the twenty-three-year-old Marcelia Cartaxo, who was performing with a regional theatre group when she was selected for the role, is grim and lumpish—she seems misshapen—and you can't believe she could look any other way. Then, in a scene where Macabéa has wangled a day off from work and is luxuriously alone in the rented room, she dances to the radio, watching herself in the mirror and swirling a sheet around her as if it were a bridal costume, and, yes, she seems to be what she longs to be—a pretty girl who could please a man. But when she's there with the Marias or is out in the city she's like a lost member of an ancient race. She's a misfit—her dinky white barrette a badge of her miserable virginity. Yet she accepts her life, accepts the slums, accepts her failure to please her boss, with a stolid meekness. She has inarticulate yearnings but no consciousness; she's all unconscious. She's simply *there*, looking to be a slave to a pathetic, twisted Olimpico. (Amaral doesn't extend much sympathetic imagination to Olimpico.)

Macabéa's story can be perceived many different ways; it's certainly a metaphor of male-female relationships and of the barely literate poor in the burgeoning big cities of the Third World, such as Mexico City, São Paulo, and Seoul. And to some degree Amaral is working inside the skin of her subject. The story connects at all sorts of points with the life of a woman who in her childhood wanted to be a movie star and, after raising nine children and divorcing her husband of twenty years, has become a star in the world of movies—the picture has been gathering major prizes at festivals. It's not a great movie, but it's good enough to get to you, and the image of Marcelia Cartaxo's Macabéa is what does it—the terrible aloneness of this mass woman, this nothing of a woman whom you wouldn't notice on the street. Umberto D. stood for all the proud, angry old people who couldn't live on their pensions, but he was himself, too—his own ornery old man. Macabéa is most herself in her moments of contentment: she smiles serenely as she celebrates her Sunday by taking a ride in the subway. It's Suzana Amaral's triumph that this girl gets away from her. Numbed as she is, she's as alive as Amaral or you or I, and more mysteriously so.



SOME directors have got audiences heated up by shooting a sex scene against a blazing fireplace. Bob Rafelson is the kind of director who gets the audience primed with a raging volcano in Hawaii but then doesn't put a sex scene in front of it. His new movie, "Black Widow," is about a slinky, cat-eyed dame (Theresa Russell) who is somehow driven to marry a series of the richest millionaires in the country and murder them. It sounds irresistibly succulent and trashy. And with Debra Winger as the investigator at the Justice Department who notices the pattern in the string of sudden deaths and gets on the widow's trail the picture should be pop bliss. But Rafelson can't seem to give trash its due; he conveys the impression of being superior to it. He doesn't fulfill the genre he's working in—or transcend it, either. He intellectualizes it.

The picture is being referred to as a "psychological thriller," but the psychology is missing. At one point, we're told that nobody knows why anybody does anything, and that has a rather chic sound. (The picture may go over big with the French.) That bit of dialogue is the moviemakers' way of telling us that they disdain motivation; it's also their excuse for not developing the characters. Theresa Russell's hair had a beautiful shine in the 1984 "The Razor's Edge;" she was pretty shiny all over. And it's fun to see her as a mercenary femme fatale; she seems to be playing a movie star, or, rather, a near-star—Gloria Grahame, to be precise. She almost has that thin-lipped icy-bitchy petulance down pat, but Rafelson and the screenwriter, Ronald Bass, seem to have beguiled themselves with the conceit that this black widow suffers after the killings. We see Russell squeezing out a few tears even when there's no one around to appreciate her grief—it's as if black widowism were a disease. Winger the investigator has some blurry, unspecified block about men and sex; she's a workaholic who keeps refusing to go out with guys, and she can't get herself together—she's swathed in bulky clothes, and her messy hair flies behind her.

Russell dispatches husbands, such as Dallas toy manufacturer Dennis Hopper and Seattle philanthropist Nicol Williamson, in a few quick scenes (though both actors are amusing and you don't want to lose them). This is handled so economically that it seems to be preparation, and you expect the movie to be about the attachment that develops between the seductress and the frump. And, of course, you expect to get some inkling of why Russell kills when she's got fortunes piled upon fortunes, and why Winger is drawn to her. What is it in Winger that makes her spot the murderous pattern and become single-mindedly absorbed in this killer, whom she gets to know? Then other questions come up. Why can't Winger show herself off except in Russell's clothes? And what keeps her out of men's embraces until Russell designates a lover for her (Russell's own new suitor, Sami Frey) in Hawaii? You expect the women to share identities, or the picture to go lesbian, or *something*. But you're wrong. This is postmodernist film noir.

Rafelson can't be bothered with anything so mundane as suspense; he doesn't seem to *believe* in suspense. He believes in high-tech swank, though. He provides an imitation of the fringe elements that used to go into star vehicles—the gowns, the cars, the on-the-move use of wouldn't-you-like-to-be-there locations. The glossy format sets off Russell's sly glamour puss, and there's a prickly challenge in her I-am-desirable manner. Her expensive look—the coiffures, the tanned, waxed limbs, the form-fitting clothes—suggests a stage set, ready for action. Even Russell's tight, narrow-range voice—the voice of a sorority girl more than of an actress—doesn't work against her here; it goes with her pampered sheen. But Winger is disappointing, because her role de-sexes her. It doesn't call upon what she's best at: a fearless hypersensuality. She's too clear-eyed and too much of an actress to be dull, but her character can't compete with a siren who angles with a platinum hook. Playing a detective, Winger has to put on a deadpan, and her husky voice is played down—maybe because the moviemakers realized that in terms of their plot it was coming out of the wrong woman.

The picture doesn't give you any shivers; it's muted, with an occasional near-pornographic texture—as in a nighttime swimming scene. (You hope for something more pornographic in Russell's personality than you get.) The writer and the director don't seem to have toyed with the possibilities in the black-widow idea. Couldn't we have had the fun of *wanting* the guys to be bumped off? There are bits that stand out, such as moments of sleazy comedy provided by James Hong as a drugged-out private investigator—a Hawaiian variant of Denholm Elliott's gutless, seedy Englishmen. But underneath the picture's studied air it's merely a caper film (like "Body Heat"), and the roles are so tawdry and underdeveloped that you may want to giggle at the fanciness. The whole thing is a very literary notion; Rafelson must talk a terrific movie.

A FEW decades of TV have conditioned audiences to laugh on raucous cue. But it would be stupid to try to convince people who are roaring at "Outrageous Fortune," the hit starring Shelley Long and Bette Midler, that it isn't very funny. The most I can do is to tell those who aren't laughing that I don't think they're deadheads. "Outrageous Fortune" should be elemental belly-laugh farce, but most of it is flattened out and rackety, an old-Hollywood chase comedy repackaged with what is being called "female raunch"—i.e., comparative anatomy. The picture is getting the same kind of laughter that "Ruthless People" did. Only now people laugh before Bette Midler does anything—they laugh in anticipation of her cute waddle walk. And this great bawdy woman who gave a heroic performance in "The Rose" and inflected everything from her hippety-hop to the gleam in her eyes in "Down and Out in Beverly Hills" is herself anticipating how bumptious and darling she's going to be. Pregnant when the picture was shot, she sticks out her chest and charges into her scenes; she's playing the Three Stooges—all three.

The setup is very simple: two young New York actresses of contrasting types—Long is a tall, blond élitist and Midler a vulgarian-sexpot Kewpie doll—discover they've been sharing a lover (Peter Coyote); when he disappears, they chase him across the country to the cliffs and mesas of New Mexico, becoming friends along the way. Shelley Long's role has obviously been shaped by someone who has watched her in her TV series, "Cheers," because once again she's playing a prissy pill and making her likable by exposing her as all screwed up. Shelley Long showed some range in pictures such as "Caveman," "Losin' It," "Night Shift," and "Irreconcilable Differences" (as well as more heaven-reaching neck than anyone in movies since Audrey Hepburn), but now that she has done a series she's in danger of seeming used up, and this performance conveys the impression that a lofty ditz is all she can play. And to some extent she's playing on our memories. Long had a blushing primness when she first did her pretentious hoity-toityness in "Cheers;" prattling about high art, she was so pleased with herself that she was rather fetching. Here the character is too brittle. This must be partly the fault of the director, Arthur Hiller (never a master of spontaneity), and partly due to the writing, which doesn't take her beyond what she's already done.

It's not hard to believe the report that the Disney-Touchstone executives swooned with pleasure when they read the script by the young woman screenwriter Leslie Dixon, who took on the assignment of devising a female-buddy-buddy picture after a couple of male teams had failed. Dixon has put the two women in the middle of a claptrap plot about spies and terrorists, with upright C.I.A. guys and devious K.G.B. guys falling all over each other, and such feminine touches as the women's stopping to try on clothes while they're running for their lives. Near the start, there are a few snappers for Midler, and she gets to shoot some wonderful derisive looks at

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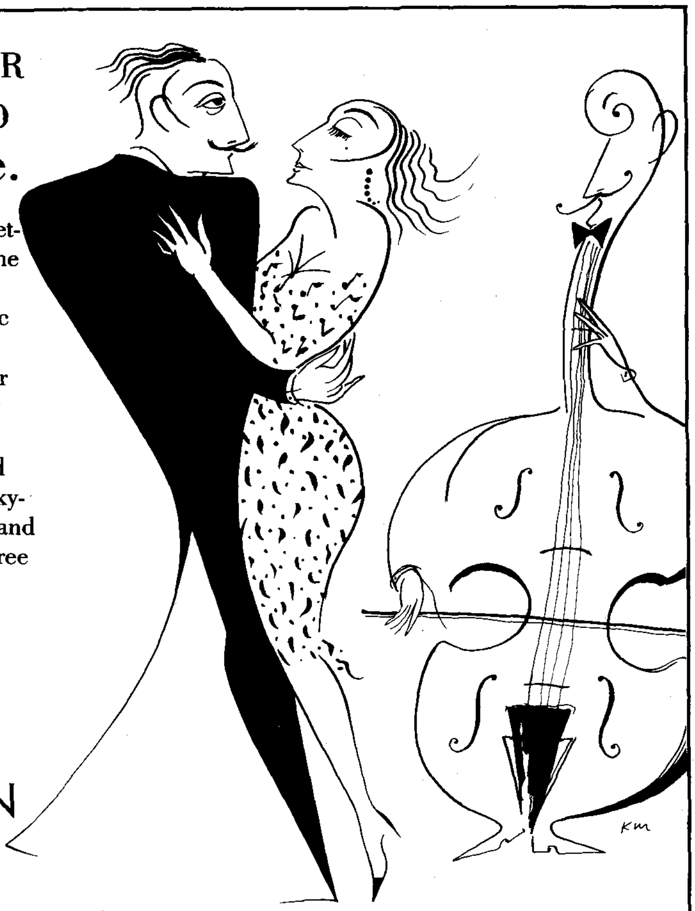
Long. Though the gags aren't fresh, Dixon knows how to construct them. With a director who had an appetite for broad comedy, this script might have been turned into a movie that had something like the self-mocking giddiness of Robert Zemeckis's "Romancing the Stone."

With Hiller in charge, much of the dialogue turns into squawking, and the tiresome escapades—scrambling through airports and clutching at the sides of mountains—take all his attention. He leaves the promising lesser characters to wither away. Robert Prosky's role, as the famed Russian acting teacher that both women study with, doesn't have a comic payoff; George Carlin appears, in flower-child Indian drag, as a leftover sixties burnout who lives on a reservation, but he doesn't do anything special—it's just supposed to be funny that he's up there in the movie. Peter Coyote stands out as the smoothie—eligible, solvent, and heterosexual—who is both women's dream lover come to life; he gives a polished and wily performance. But that's only in the first section; then he gets lost in the noise. And though the two women go through the motions of becoming devoted to each other they're not much of a team: they don't bring out anything in each other. Hiller depends on Midler to pump sass and energy into the picture; that's better than nothing, but it's not enough. And Hiller avidly touches the audience's soft spots. Midler's gutsy broad is shown to be all heart, and to be thin-skinned. The most exuberant woman lech we've got is reduced to being a conventional good girl.

The audience whoops it up; the audience loves this cartoon version of Bette Midler. In the Paul Brickman–Jonathan Demme "Citizens Band," which came out ten years ago, two contrasting women (softheaded, gaga Ann Wedgeworth and hard-bitten Marcia Rodd) weren't just having affairs with the same man, they were married to him, and each of them had kids by him. That picture had the idiosyncratic, loose-screw American humor that this picture lacks, but it didn't cue people when to laugh. It was a commercial flop, of course. The wide movie audience appears to resent American pictures that aren't in mainstream style. In some angry, instinctive way, the audience seems to be saying of the artists, "How do *they* dare to be different?" The rewards for not being different have never been higher.

—PAULINE KAEL



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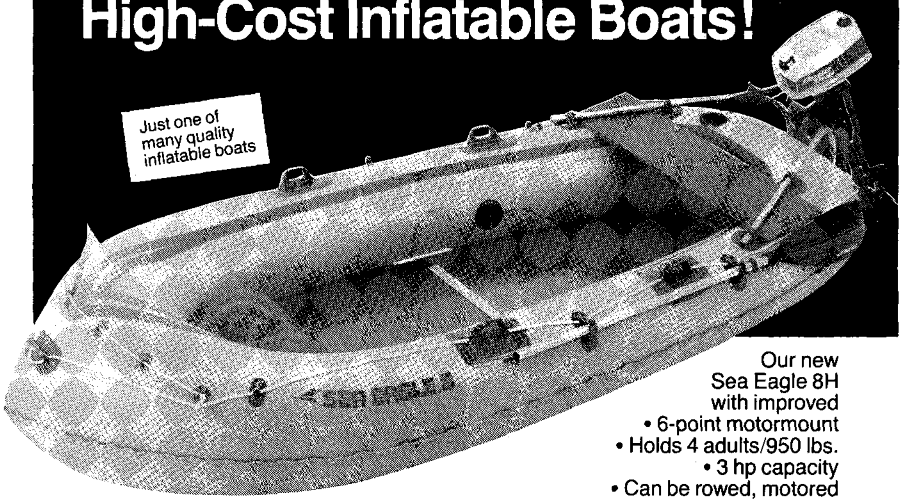

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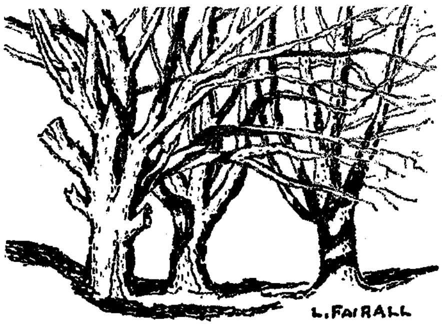
THE ART WORLD

Peaks and Valleys

THE new Lila Acheson Wallace Wing for twentieth-century art at the Metropolitan Museum is receiving the sort of mixed notices that must be highly irritating to its sponsors. This was predictable. In New York, anything as big, as costly, and as heavily publicized as the Wallace Wing is due for some bad-mouthing. No one can find much to complain about in the architecture. Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo & Associates, the architects responsible for all the Met's vast and seemingly limitless expansions since 1970, have provided twenty-two beautifully proportioned new galleries in assorted shapes and sizes, from intimate rooms for small-scale works on paper to palatial chambers with twenty-foot ceilings (the sculpture court on the mezzanine level has a thirty-foot ceiling)—galleries in which the grandiose paintings of Jackson Pollock, Clyfford Still, and other Abstract Expressionist heroes are heroically enshrined. The new wing is truly a museum within a museum, containing two-thirds of the total exhibition space of the Museum of Modern Art and considerably more than the Whitney or the Guggenheim. One of the questions that are being asked, however, is whether New York really needs a fourth museum devoted primarily to the art of this century. And a good deal of the bad-mouthing has to do with the relative weakness of the Met's holdings in this area. Despite the admirable skill and resourcefulness with which William S. Lieberman, the chairman of the Department of Twentieth-Century Art, has sought to distract attention from these weaknesses (some of the most impressive works on view, it turns out, do not belong to the museum but were simply borrowed for the opening show), the Metropolitan is clearly a long, long way from rivalling MOMA as a showcase for the twentieth century. Strong in American painting up to the Second World War, largely as a result of Georgia O'Keeffe's 1949 donation of a significant part of the Alfred Stieglitz collection, it is weak in early European modernism—no Futurism, no Constructivism, no De Stijl, very little Expressionism, and virtually no Cubism, the century's most important contribution to Western art. Abstract Expressionism is well represented, but subsequent developments are not—no Rauschenberg, no Johns. At the Museum of Modern Art, the whole mountain range of modernism is charted with arrogant assurance; at the Met, the valleys are as conspicuous as the peaks.

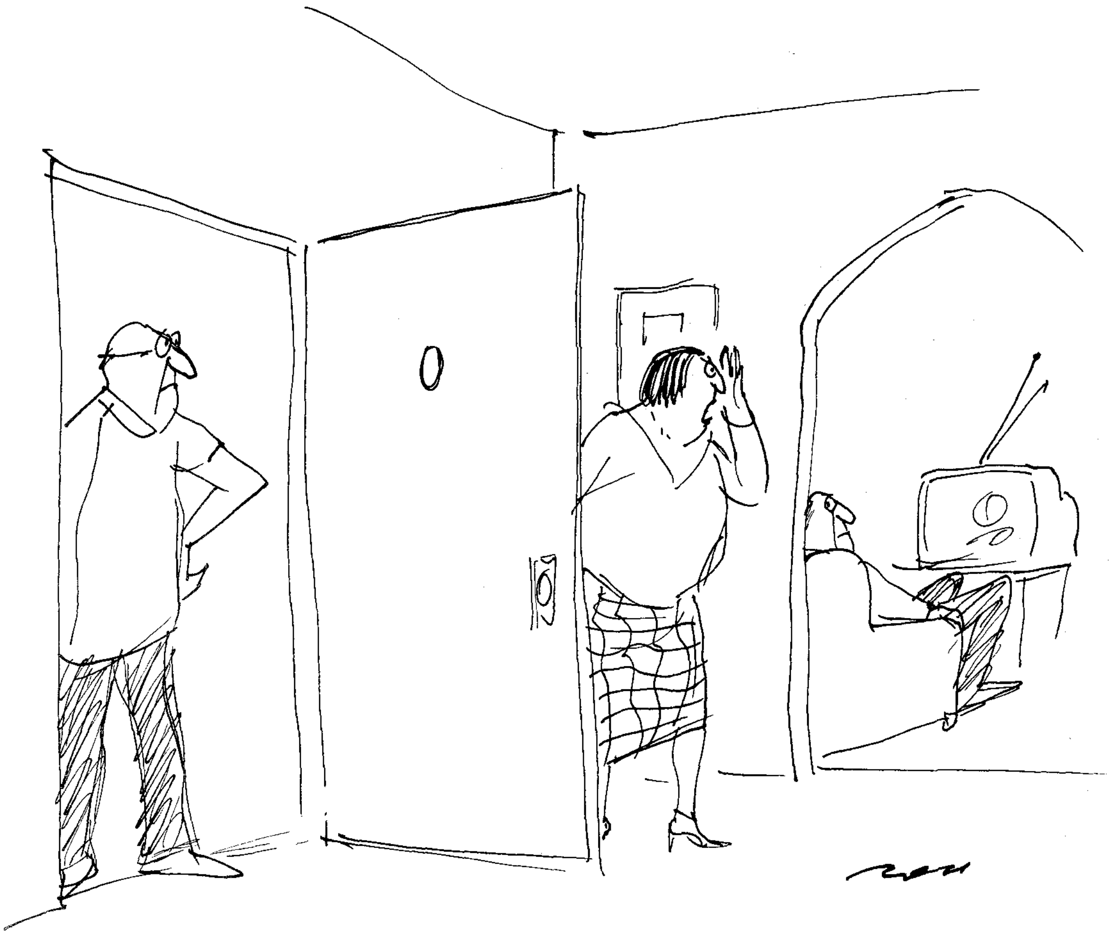
One of the Met's more valuable holdings is Lieberman himself. Having spent his entire professional career at the Museum of Modern Art (thirty-four years), he brought to the Metropolitan, when he moved there in 1979, a comprehensive knowledge not only of the modern movement but also of the collectors who might one day decide (or be persuaded) to give their modern masterworks to public collections. The social aspects of Lieberman's curatorial genius have already been felt at the Met, which has received several important gifts since his arrival: the Muriel Kallis Steinberg Newman Collection, a promised gift that is particularly strong in works by first-generation Abstract Expressionists; the Scofield Thayer bequest, with its superb Matisse ("Nasturtiums and 'Dance' ") and other European pictures that the former editor of *The Dial* collected during the nineteen-twenties; the ninety works by Paul Klee, covering every phase of his career, donated by the Swiss art dealer Heinz Berggruen. The Met is counting on Lieberman's wide acquaintance with potential benefactors to help fill the huge gaps that remain—it is much too late to fill them any other way. Philippe de Montebello, the museum's director, has been forthright in addressing this problem. "Our holdings in twentieth-century art are spotty and uneven," he has said, "and we do not pretend that they are comparable to those in, say, European paintings or Egyptian objects." De Montebello is quick to point out, however, that the Met has been "collecting and exhibiting the work of living artists for fifty years," and he has also pinned down what is really at stake here. "Ninety-nine per cent of all collectors—the rich, those who are interested and will support museums in the future—are collectors of contemporary art," he said. "We are not, as an act of volition, going to cut ourselves off from the supporters of the future."



Precisely. The Metropolitan can no longer afford—or thinks it cannot afford—to stay out of the contemporary fray. This says a lot about the economic, political, and social power of the current art market, in which an early painting by Jasper Johns recently brought three million six hundred thousand dollars at auction, and it also says (or implies) a lot about the future direction of art museums. In this era of blockbuster loan shows and ever-increasing corporate involvement in museum policies, contemporary art has become the tail that wags the dog. Impressive new museums devoted mainly or exclusively to contemporary art have recently opened or are about to open in Los Angeles, Houston, Fort Lauderdale, and a number of other cities throughout the country. In New York, the Museum of Modern Art has doubled its exhibition space, and both the Whitney and the Guggenheim are hoping to increase theirs. A new generation of art collectors has emerged, made up in large part of men and women who have struck it rich in real estate, public relations, corporate takeovers, and other high-risk sectors of the economy. These people are drawn to contemporary-art buying for many of the same reasons that they are drawn to real estate or corporate takeovers: they like to take chances, to play their hunches, to operate in the fast lane. The new collectors have been making their presence felt on the board of nearly every major museum in the country. The museums need the collectors' money, to be sure, but having these people on the board presents problems. Very few of them have had a long-term relationship with works of art. They are used to operating aggressively, and they are less inclined than their predecessors to let the professional staff run the show. When the speculative impulse substitutes for aesthetic judgment, moreover, it is particularly prone to mistakes, which the museum may later be asked to absorb.

A new ballgame is being played in the art world today, and older players are discovering that the old rules often do not apply.

The Metropolitan's commitment to contemporary art is in itself a recent development. Although it is true that the museum has been collecting and exhibiting contemporary work for half a century, as de Montebello says, for most of that time it has done so grudgingly and with very little distinction. In 1906, George A. Hearn, a New York department-store magnate and a Metropolitan trustee, gave the museum a hundred and fifty thousand dollars as a fund to use for the purchase of works by living American artists; five years later, he set up an additional fund, of a hundred thousand dollars, in memory of his son. Hearn himself made most of the purchases while he was alive, and he bought rather well. After his death, in 1913, though, the trustees rarely seemed to find anything worth buying in the contemporary line. In fact, they managed to have their lawyers reinterpret the terms of Hearn's gift so that it would apply to artists living at the time the original gift was made, in 1906. When a number of living artists and critics later complained publicly about the unspent income from the Hearn Funds, which by 1927 amounted to ninety thousand dollars, the trustees therefore were able to spend the entire sum on the late John Singer Sargent's "The Wyndham Sisters."

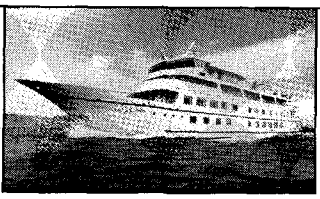


"It's your dentist, Charlie. He says it's been five years!"

• •

Matters improved after 1937, when the Metropolitan, responding to intensified protests by artists and others, engaged the Whitney Museum curator Lloyd Goodrich to advise it on purchases from the Hearn Funds. (The Met had flatly refused Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's offer to donate her entire collection of American paintings and sculptures in 1929—a rebuff that was directly responsible for the founding of the Whitney Museum a year later.) Goodrich's recommendations were generally followed at the Met, and a large number of American works entered the collection as a result. There was an almost total bias, however, against abstract art. The painter Stuart Davis complained in 1940 that the Metropolitan "suppresses modern and abstract art in its policies as effectively as would a totalitarian regime." This suppression extended to advanced European work as well. Although the museum had been willing in 1889 to accept two Manets, and had actually bought Cézanne's "La Colline des Pauvres" from the Armory Show in 1913 (the first painting by Cézanne to enter a public collection in America), it proved more or less impervious to later developments in modernism. When Harry Wehle, the curator of paintings, was offered the loan of a major Picasso in the nineteen-thirties, he replied disdainfully, "If it's a pile of bones, the answer is no." MOMA's Alfred Barr wrote a catalogue essay in 1934 in which he noted that the Metropolitan owned "no works by Gauguin, Seurat, Signac, Toulouse-Lautrec, Henri Rousseau, Matisse, Derain, Picasso, Dunoyer de Segonzac, and Modigliani." Herbert Winlock, the Met's director at the time, sent a letter to Bryson Burroughs, Wehle's predecessor as curator, saying that it was "a great surprise" to him and to George Blumenthal, the president of the board of trustees, "to find that we actually had no paintings by these people. Do you not think it would be a good idea if we got some?"

A serious attempt to resolve the modern-art dilemma was made in 1947, when the Metropolitan entered into what was called the Three Museum Agreement with the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney. Under this curious legal instrument, the Met agreed to refrain from buying contemporary European art (no great change) and arranged to transfer to MOMA certain modern works that both museums had decided could be better displayed there. For its part, MOMA



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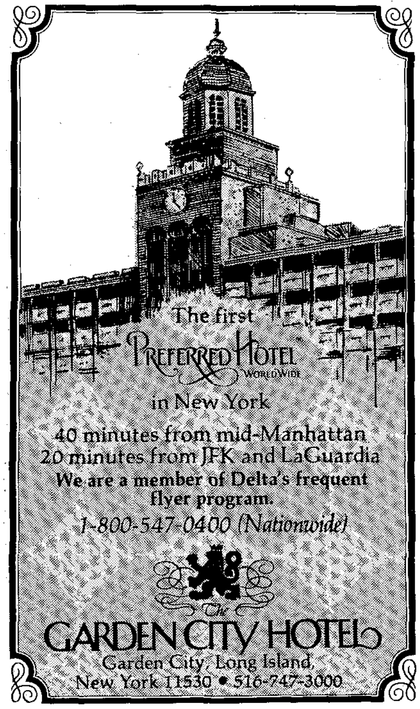

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agreed to sell to the Metropolitan a total of forty works that were deemed to be "classics" of modernism (including Picasso's famous 1923 "Woman in White"). The precedent was clearly the relationship that had existed for many years between the Louvre and the Luxembourg museums in Paris, wherein the works of important artists passed after their death from the Luxembourg to the Louvre, which paid for them and thus provided the Luxembourg with funds to buy works by living artists. And the presumption was that as the century advanced more and more "classic" modern works, having stood the test of time at MOMA, would find their way to the Met. The Whitney, meanwhile, was to pack up and move physically into the Metropolitan, in a new wing to be built for that purpose; it would become a semi-independent fiefdom, with full responsibility for the whole troublesome question of contemporary American art. The Three Museum Agreement foundered almost immediately, largely as a result of personality conflicts among the three directors and their principal staff and trustees. Barr and his colleagues at MOMA worried that future benefactors might decide to give their treasures to the Met directly if they thought the works might go there anyway in time; they came to feel that the Modern was giving up more than it stood to gain by the agreement. The Whitney people decided that advanced, abstract art would never get a fair hearing at the Metropolitan. The coalition idea was not really tested, and in retrospect this seems a great pity.

The Metropolitan did start buying advanced American art in 1949, when Robert Beverly Hale was named curator of the newly formed Department of American Art. Braving the indignation of certain trustees, Hale bought a small painting by Jackson Pollock out of his own modest curatorial funds in 1952, and five years later he used it as part payment for Pollock's great "Autumn Rhythm," which today is one of the glories of the collection. (Hale had to telephone every trustee to plead for the rest of the purchase price.) In 1967, the museum established a Department of Contemporary Art, whose first curator, Henry Geldzahler, functioned for several years as one of the more highly visible personages of the sixties art scene; his enthusiasm for the work of Andy Warhol, Frank Stella, Kenneth Noland, and other young artists seemed to compensate in some way for the Met's reluctance to buy their work. Geldzahler left in 1977, to become New York City's Commissioner of Cultural Affairs. He was succeeded at the Met by Thomas B. Hess, the distinguished critic and editor, who died before completing his first year on the job. Lieberman then took over.

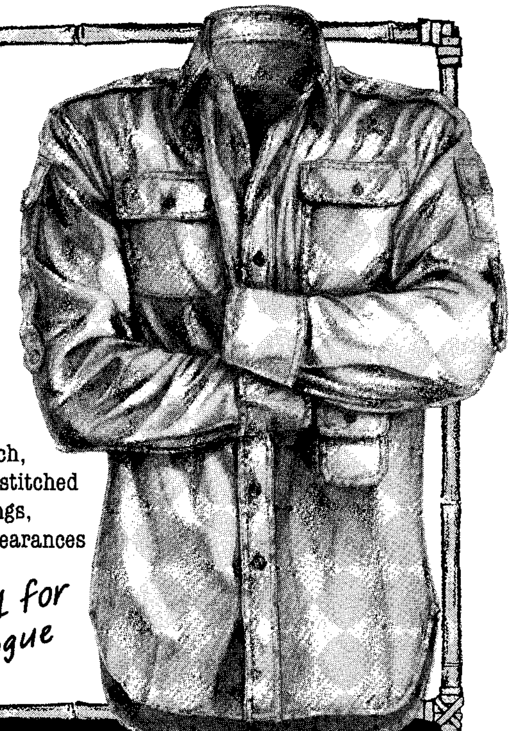
After a decade of limited operations in galleries borrowed from the Department of European Paintings, the retitled Department of Twentieth-Century Art has now emerged as one of the most powerful duchies in the Metropolitan's vast feudal system. Lieberman is going after major works in all categories, European as well as American, and since his departmental acquisition funds are minuscule he will be competing with MOMA, the Guggenheim, the Whitney, and other institutions for the largesse of potential donors. All the better for contemporary art, we are told. Competition is healthy, everyone benefits, and, besides, where else in New York can you see great paintings by Pollock and de Kooning in the same building as great paintings by Velázquez, Rubens, and other Old Masters? The Metropolitan is our "encyclopedic" museum, as de Montebello keeps reminding us, and an encyclopedia must have all the letters. How can anybody argue with that?

Dissatisfaction nevertheless intrudes. Some of it is on aesthetic grounds. In spite of the high-ceilinged rooms full of Abstract Expressionism; in spite of Lieberman's brilliant decision to borrow and install in the large temporary-exhibition gallery on the first floor a three-hundred-and-eighty-eight-foot section of the "¼ Mile or 2 Furlong Piece," by Robert Rauschenberg, an artist whose seminal imagination has been somewhat neglected of late (especially by the Met); in spite of all the offbeat and fascinating juxtapositions that make Lieberman's installation different from anything you can see at the Museum of Modern Art, there are long stretches of wall space in the new wing where one's gratitude falters and fades. Rows and rows of small representational pictures by small representational American painters of the thirties and forties. Peripheral works by peripheral artists, holding the walls until bigger and better examples arrive. On the second floor, one of those high-ceilinged galleries is filled with huge, bombastic pictures done since 1982—the latest SoHo product. Lieberman can afford to buy the work of some very young artists with his departmental funds, and the Met clearly trusts his famous eye to make the right choices. But is this how the Metropolitan Museum should function? In all other departments, the museum's stock in trade is the established masterpiece, time-tested and certified. A great many people go to the Met with the expectation of seeing just that. Lieberman's eye thus becomes a major factor in the contemporary-art market, and this may present a certain amount of embarrassment later on.

Another kind of dissatisfaction is being voiced within the Met itself, and within the museum profession. The new wing will cost an estimated two million dollars a year just to maintain. Although half that amount has been pledged as an endowment from Lila Acheson Wallace—the co-founder of the *Reader's Digest*, who provided the bulk of the wing's cost, of twenty-six million dollars—coming up with the other half will put an additional strain on the museum's finances. It remains to be seen what effect the new tax law is going to have on museums, dependent as they have been on tax-deductible contributions and on the tax advantages formerly gained from donations of works of art to public collections. Some Metropolitan curators feel that the museum's financial constraints have already affected their ability to compete for the top objects in their fields. When a supreme work of art comes on the market now, they say, it is rarely even offered to the Met; the dealers prefer to go first to the J. Paul Getty Museum, in Malibu, or the Kimbell Art Museum, in Fort Worth, where funds are more plentiful and decisions can be made quickly. It has been said that the Metropolitan is a great institution in decline—that it loses out too often to the National Gallery, in Washington, in the scramble for big international loan shows, and that it is no longer the first choice of employment for leading art scholars.

What an irony it would be if the Metropolitan's expansionist drive to become the world's most "encyclopedic" museum should turn out to have undermined its real greatness as an institution. The opening of the Wallace Wing seems to suggest that, insofar as the museum's present leaders can judge, the present and the future now outweigh the past.

—Calvin Tomkins



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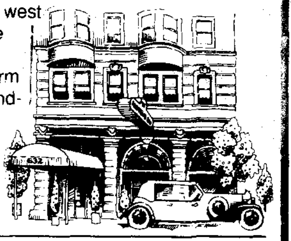

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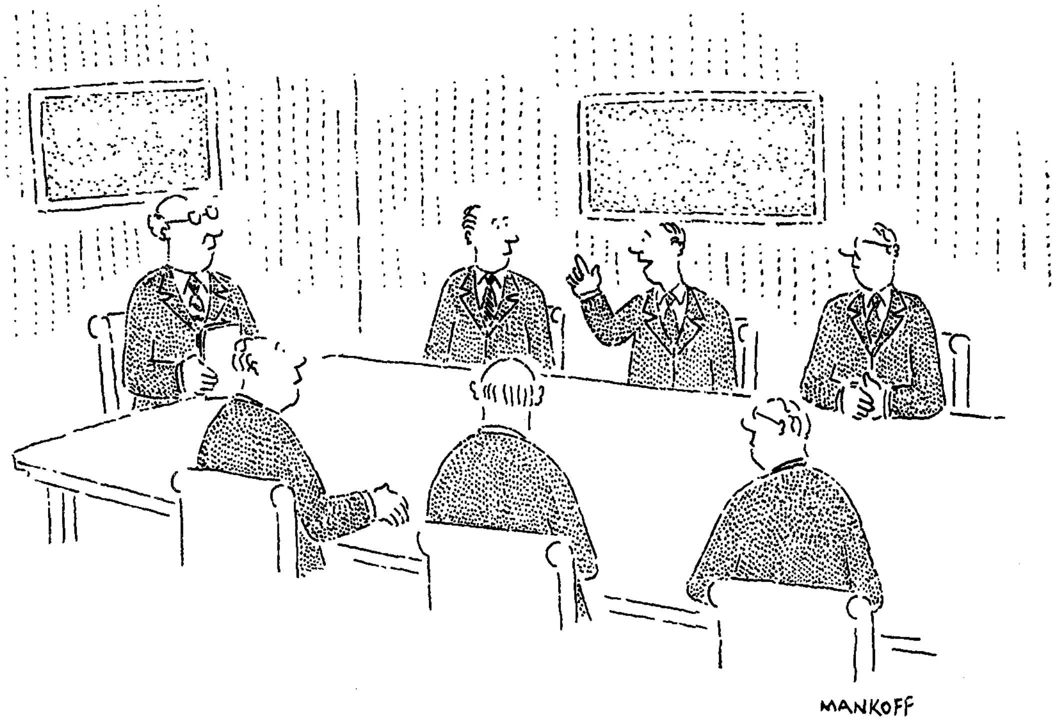
DANCING

Postmodern Ballets

Twyla Tharp has formed a new company—eleven replacements out of seventeen dancers—since her last New York season, three years ago. This time out, key performers like Sara Rudner, Jennifer Way, and Tom Rawe are among the missing, not to mention Tharp herself. And while Way and Rawe and Mary Ann Kellogg and Christine Uchida have returned to do one or two roles apiece, either as guest artists or as covers for the injured, Tharp has chosen not to appear in anything. All the more reason, then, to expect a difference in the way the company dances. But my first impression on opening night at the Brooklyn Academy was that Twyla Tharp Dance, as the company calls itself, was more like Twyla than ever. Men as well as women danced like her, stood like her, ran and walked like her. They seemed to have ingested her nervous system along with her dance style. I suppose this is normal enough for a company that is going through its first full-scale generational turnover. The new dancers are quite young—some are as much as twenty years younger than the founding members—and they're as pliable as warm cookie dough. The Supreme Founder has shaped them as she couldn't have shaped her peers, and, probably without meaning to, has instituted a whole set of personal mannerisms. In certain roles inherited from the company's other stars, the young ones take on the characteristics of those stars as well; Tom Rawe is uncannily present in Jamie Bishton's dancing of Rawe's roles in "Baker's Dozen" and "Nine Sinatra Songs." But Tharp has also worked to give the newcomers latitude. All the girls are ballet-trained, and the two new pieces that Tharp has choreographed for the season include parts for women on point. There could be a collision in the making between the girls' schooling in classical technique and their impressionability in respect to style. But these are good, smart dancers. My guess is that as they mature they'll assert their individuality. They've already begun to shed the behavioral tics, and the season is still on.

But will they, in turn, give Tharp's choreography the new grounding in pointwork which it seems to demand? In "In the Upper Room" (to a Philip Glass score) and in most of "Ballare" (to a double-piano sonata by Mozart), the passages on toe look inorganic and unexpressive. Points are a new and raw element in company choreography. Though Tharp has used them before, she has really succeeded only when the dancers have been other than her own—when they've been ballerinas with technical wisdom and years of stage experience. Tharp's own schooling was eclectic. (Her written script for "The Bix Pieces" opened with the line "I hated to tap-dance when I was a kid." She probably hated toe shoes even more.) As a choreographer, her technique has always been a zealously acquisitive one. She was the first of the postmodernists to work with ballet companies and to hire ballet dancers. She was the first to put an end to barefoot dancing, and she could be the first to acquire point technique and make something new of it. Her earliest use of points, in "As Time Goes By," had a primitive charm that reminded me, at the time, of Nijinska. First danced by the Joffrey in 1973, this enchanting Haydn ballet is now in the Tharp-company repertory, and it retains its freshness. Tharp—or the ballet dancers she worked with—managed to blend elastically resilient pointwork with Tharpian dynamics. The gravitational pull of the body as it spun off center, the driving force of the legs were somehow enhanced; point technique seemed on the verge of categorical redefinition. This was integral expression, not the tokenism we see now in the Glass ballet, where the legwork is done on little stilts, and one feels no connection between the poised foot and the plunging instep or between the foot and the leg. And though Tharp's dancers are now all completely turned out, one feels no control from their turnout. In classical dancers, the impulse that ends in the pointed foot begins in the hip socket and radiates outward even when the step is turned in. I don't know why this is so; I only know that without clear motivation from the hip the foot on point looks like an Eleanor Powell novelty. It's a mysterious business, pointwork, and I don't doubt that Twyla Tharp will soon master it. There's distinct progress in "Ballare." At first, the women seem to be doing nothing but bobbing and spinning in place or maneuvering from place to place. The movement looks constricted, not like that of ballet dancers or Tharp dancers, either. This goes on until the third section, when a synthesis occurs. Each girl has a solo that covers ground, and each looks natural and free. The piece ends happily, a real breakthrough. One is ready to forgive the crudity of "In the Upper Room," where the points are only a means of advertising the newly constituted company and what it can do. (Just to make sure you get the message, the girls wear red socks and red toe shoes as part of their Norma Kamali costumes.)

Lincoln Kirstein's complaint about modern dance—that it is narcissistic and lacking in continuity—comes into your mind when you see a stageful of Twylas, and when you see them going up on point you may agree with his assertion, to W. McNeil Lowry in a recent issue of this magazine, that modern dance has in fact disintegrated, because "the so-called post-postmodernists are all embracing ballet." Kirstein cited "Bach Partita," created in 1983 by Tharp for American Ballet Theatre, as an example of the classical ballet's ability to absorb "bastard variations, mutations, conversions, perversions" and thus perpetuate itself, whereas modern dance can[illegible] absorb ballet or perpetuate itself, because it is inherently anti-academic. In an article called "The Curse of Isadora," published a few weeks before in the Sunday *Times*, Kirstein located the fatal flaw in the democratic cult of



"If I'm not being too bold, Chief—shut up."

self-expression. The moribund academy of his time left Isadora Duncan no other option, he wrote, and though she exercised it gloriously ("In dry seasons she poured rich wine"), her legacy was doom: "She certified modern dance with its dwindling succession." Kirstein has been saying these things for years. Why, on the eve of his eightieth birthday, with the School of American Ballet faithfully nourished by private donations and government grants, does he still say them? Might it not be time for another essay, called "The Curse of Balanchine," in which it would be shown how the great choreographer created twentieth-century ballet and put it off-limits at the same time? He incorporated into the mainstream everything there was to incorporate—jazz, Bauhaus, twelve-tone music, American pop; yes, even the modern dance—and left the academy at a peak of virtuosity, with nothing further to express. Balanchine's progeny rework his accomplishments; they can honor his precedents, but they can add nothing to what he has said.

I gather that Kirstein thinks that reworking Balanchine is better than letting those whom he calls "dance dilettantes" get at his company. He seems to see academic training as a guarantee against anarchy and hazardous experimentation. New York City Ballet's latest première, Paul Mejia's "Sinfonia Mistica," must therefore have been a bitter disappointment to him. Mejia, a graduate of the School of American Ballet, produced choreography that was not only hazardous but theatrically naïve to a degree that would have embarrassed an S.A.B. workshop production. It didn't use "the lexicon"—it didn't know how. Luckily, the company also presented this season two new ballets by Peter Martins, who may be said to represent the academy at its most purely and zestfully proficient. I like best those ballets of his which extend the dancers' virtuosity, so I liked "Les Petits Riens," to Mozart's music, better than "Ecstatic Orange," a big, boomingly hollow work to a minimalist-Stravinskyan score by Michael Torke, executed in Martins' Broadway-show style. The average age of the four boys and four girls in "Les Petits Riens" matches that of the dancers who have recently joined Twyla Tharp. The fact that Martins was able to hold these young people to the virtuoso standard he himself embodied as a dancer without having them mimic his dancing proves Kirstein's point about self-expression. But was it so very long ago that New York City Ballet was going through its spasm of imitating Suzanne Farrell, not only under Balanchine's very eye but seemingly at his behest? Critics were heard then to complain that Farrell was outside the classical tradition; now, at the moment of her retirement, they celebrate her centrality to the classical tradition as Balanchine has developed it. And who is to say that what Farrell gave Balanchine was not "self-expression"? But for her meeting with Balanchine, might she not have been another Isadora?

Farrellism was the last of Balanchine's great acquisitions. Today, the process of incorporation begun by that acquisition goes on, but invisibly, like the jazz in "Concerto Barocco" and the square dancing in "Square Dance." I think the mistake many outsiders make when they look at Balanchine's ballets is to confuse Balanchine's language with neutral academic expression. Karole Armitage recently launched a new company on the strength of this confusion. I imagine she thought she was extending Balanchine's territory in her Webern-Stravinsky ballet, when she was really quoting or parodying him. Armitage, who had ballet lessons but gained her fame as a Merce Cunningham dancer, has taken to wearing toe shoes; she calls her company the Armitage Ballet, and her guest artists in her opening season at the Joyce were Stephanie Saland and Robert La Fosse. Without the sense these two dancers made of an Armitage pas de deux, the evening would have been chaos. Armitage has a more reflexive understanding of pointwork than Tharp does. With Armitage, points look self-conscious, but not artificial. (She herself looks a lot like Farrell in Béjart's choreography.) But she's doing what Kirstein accuses the dilettantes of doing—souping up her performance with ballet stylization. I can only assume that the skillful choreography she made for A.B.T. in "The Mollino Room" was the result of her working, like Tharp, with experienced classical dancers.

ONE of Balanchine's Louis Quatorze utterances might well have been "*L'académie c'est moi.*" His us-

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ages have become standard. His Baroque is *the* Baroque. He even thought up his own heresies, so in order to rebel against him a choreographer has to risk being completely incoherent. (Maybe this was Mejia's plan.) In "Ballare," Tharp is not guilty of ballet stylization, or even Balanchine stylization; she's trying for straight classical expression in flowing white costumes (by William Ivey Long). Yet something—maybe the combination of pointwork and intricate Mozart piano music—throws off her rhythm. Can there be anything more difficult for a choreographer than making classical ballets in the Age of Balanchine? Kirstein is right: there is a void in American dance, and there has been a rush to the ballet, and it could be dangerous. In England, where there has not, until recently, been a native modern dance, a new tradition has been formed by blending English classical schooling with an aesthetic derived from Cunningham. The choreographer and company responsible for the blend, Richard Alston and Ballet Rambert, passed through New York on a North American tour. Compared with what is going on here, they are only moderately progressive, but they left the clear impression that it was still possible for dancers to take uncomplicated pleasure in their work. And they gave pleasure. The English dance delightfully, in three dimensions, with grownup manners. Alston doesn't duplicate the Cunningham formula for presenting dance; he uses sound and choreographs to its pulse. Or, less compellingly, he choreographs in silence. Sound, whether verbal or musical, is something more than aural décor; sometimes, as in "Java," a piece to Ink Spots records, it's a text. "Java" is the kind of nutty confection I could happily live with. Its matching of movement to sound is so ritualistically precise I'm only sorry Alston didn't lay any comic stress on the Spots' own rituals—that same eight-bar vamping introduction, that same high tenor who sings the song, that same dolorous basso who speaks it.

So amiable, unstrained, and limply lyrical a piece as "Java" is unimaginable in the climate of American dance. And I can't imagine Alston or any of the other Rambert choreographers recycling their work, as Americans do, making it new, then more new. In "In the Upper Room," not only do you see Twyla in just about everything the dancers do but you see the sources of her material—aerobics, karate, jogging, boxing, break dancing, and of course ballet—and you see them more clearly than in the 1983 piece called "Fait Accompli," which used similar material in a similarly striking format but used it less obviously and more tendentiously. "Fait Accompli" was in two sections, one starring the company, the other starring Tharp; it had a "crisis" subtext, a David Van Tieghem score, and neo-expressionistic-cathedral lighting by Jennifer Tipton. Tipton more or less reproduces her plot in "In the Upper Room;" as before, dancers enter and exit upstage, behind a curtain of golden mist. Arranged in nine sections, designed as a full-company vehicle without stars, "In the Upper Room" is unambiguously a dance suite, and I had an almost intolerably mixed reaction to it. Just when I was ready to dismiss it as designer choreography given a megalomaniacal production, it would veer back to being genuine, and I'd rub my eyes and see that it was probably closer to being Tharp's Olympiad than "Fait Accompli" was. It's also a huge audience hit—a gift to the aerobics generation. Glass's music, with its tootling ostinatos and keening strings, contributes exactly the supercharged atmosphere that Tharp wants here, although it's easy to see why she has not collaborated with Glass before. He sets a properly frenetic pace but builds no momentum; each dance is pinned in its own gridlike cage of sound. Compared with David Byrne's score for "The Catherine Wheel" (remounted this season in a streamlined new production and in a smashing performance), the Glass makes almost no rhythmic or textural demands on Tharp. And she doesn't seem to want them. Breaking in a new company, holding the line at the box office, laying the groundwork for artistic conquests of a kind never before seriously associated with her—these seem to have been the priorities that shaped Tharp's current season. The Glass ballet was a predetermined success; with it, Tharp reaches a new public and takes out insurance for her experiments in classicism. Unlike "Fait Accompli," "In the Upper Room" will probably last a couple of seasons. As the piece in which aerobics are made cosmic, as the proclamation of Twyla Tharp Dance II, it may not become a classic, but who can deny its significance?

—Arlene Croce

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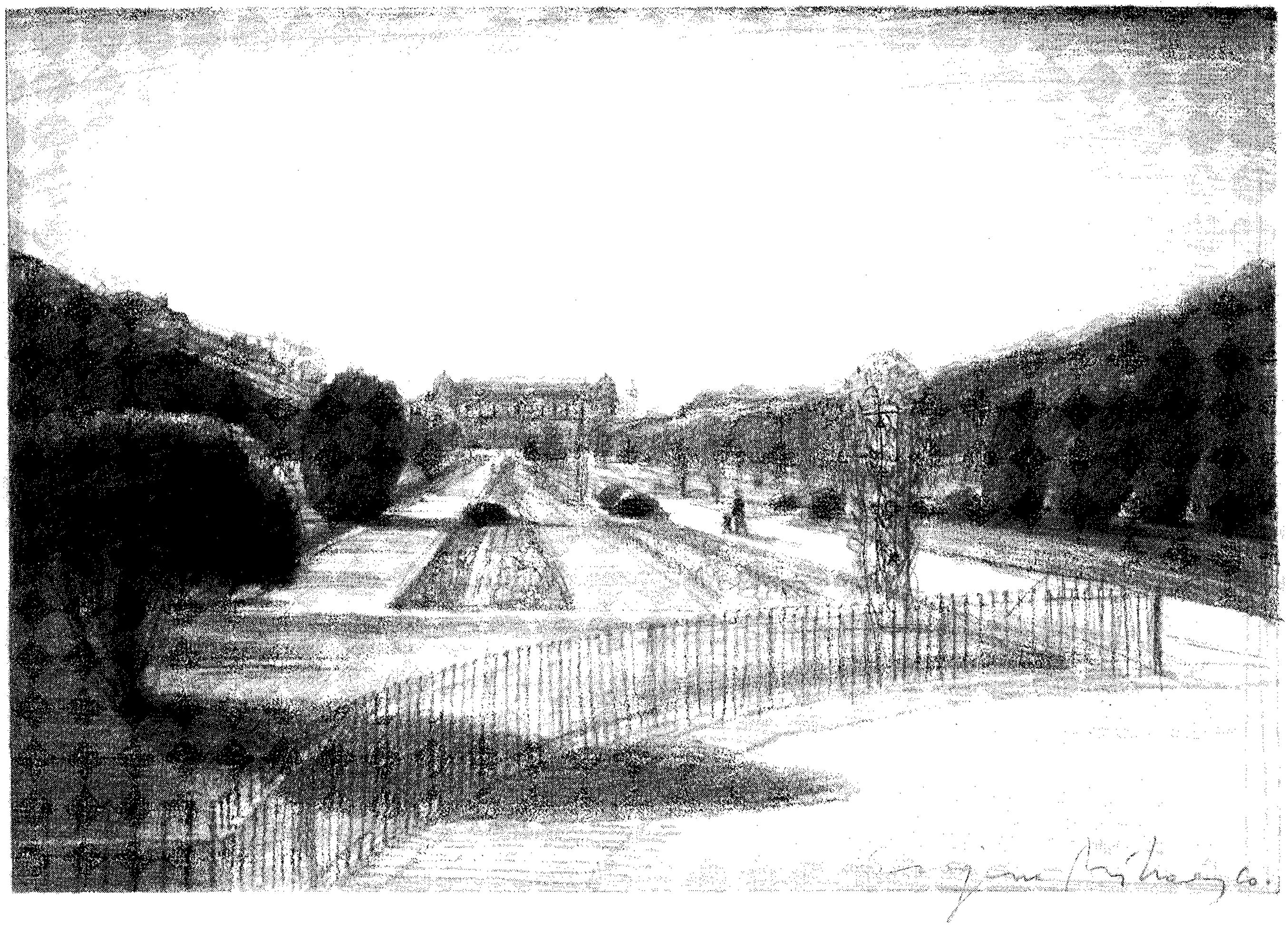
PLEASANT AND LIVING



THE last time I was in Paris, I gave myself the pleasure, the unusual pleasure, of a long day in the Jardin des Plantes. I say unusual because the Jardin des Plantes, though a favorite pleasance of Parisians of all ages and classes since the turn of the eighteenth century, and no more inaccessible than Nôtre Dame, is all but unknown to tourists. The reason for this would seem to be reasonably clear. The Jardin des Plantes is not a certified sight. It is not Nôtre Dame. It is not the Champs-Élysées or the Eiffel Tower, the Opéra or the Centre Pompidou, the Louvre or the Panthéon or the Café des Deux-Magots. It is still distinctively French and Parisian. In all the hours I walked and wandered there, I hardly saw a man or a woman without a cigarette, I hardly saw a man or a woman without a commodious bag or pocketbook or carryall of some sort, I never saw a pair of sunglasses, and I never overheard a word that wasn't French. Toward the end of the day, when I made her acquaintance, I mentioned this impression to Geneviève Boulinier, the Jardin's public-relations director ("Relations Extérieures et Service de Presse"), and she looked thoughtful. "Oh?" she said. "Oh, no. I do not think that can be entirely correct. It was only two weeks ago we had two visitors here from Finland."

The Jardin des Plantes (like the Panthéon) is on the Left Bank of the Seine, in the populous 5th Arrondissement. It is almost literally on the riverbank. It occupies some seventy walled and richly verdant acres just upstream from the Île Saint-Louis and fronting on the Quai Saint-Bernard and a stretch of Giscard d'Estaing's ingenious stringbean riverside park. It is neighbored on the east by the mass of the Gare d'Austerlitz and on the northwest by the skyscraper campus of the Faculté des Sciences de l'Université de Paris, and the names of the streets that roughly bound it signal something of its history and its character—Rue Buffon, Rue Linné, Rue Cuvier, Rue de Jussieu, Rue Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. The main, or Seine-side, entrance, a splendor of carved stone and gilded wrought iron, opens on the Esplanade Lamarck.

It is not certain just where the Jardin des Plantes had its beginnings. History records only that it was developed on its present site as the Jardin Royal des Plantes Médicinales (to meet the needs of an expanding herbal pharmacology) in 1635, at the urging of Guy de la Brosse, physician to Louis XIII. For more than a hundred and fifty years, it continued to function under various versions of its royal title, first as directed by de la Brosse himself, and then by such men as Guy Fagon, royal physician to Louis XIV, and Buffon himself, the most eminent natural historian of his day. It emerged from the Revolution as the egalitarian Jardin des Plantes. Though still most visibly a botanical garden, it has vigorously evolved over the many years into something considerably more than that. It now embraces among its gardens and groves a consortium of research and teaching institutes that cover almost the entire curriculum of the natural sciences (biology, chemistry, ecology, entomology, geology, mineralogy, paleontology, zoology, comparative anatomy), a beguilement of natural curiosities, and even a menagerie.

I CAME into the Jardin des Plantes by way of the Esplanade Lamarck on a mild, cloudless early-autumn morning. It was hardly ten o'clock, but there were strollers to the right and left and the fore and aft of me. All of them had their bags or pocketbooks or carryalls. I carried a guidebook, the only guide to the Jardin that I could find—a little pamphlet (in French) with a couple of dozen illustrations and a foldout map. We strollers broke ranks around a massive bronze statue—a triple-life-size seated figure in knee breeches. I paused for a closer look: "1744 LAMARCK 1829/ FONDATEUR DE LA DOCTRINE DE L'ÉVOLUTION." I looked again. *Fondateur* of the theory? The Jardin des Plantes was indeed a French, a Parisian, enclave.

Beyond Lamarck stretched an immense parterre of gravel paths and beds of flowers, in brilliant, sunstruck bloom. The parterre extended between a double *allée* of sculptured plane and chestnut trees, and it went on and on and on, for what looked like half a mile, to another esplanade and a building in the style of an eighteenth-century palace. My map identified the building as the Galerie de Zoologie, and through the trees on the left I could see similar buildings—among them (according to my map) the Galerie de Minéralogie et de Géologie, the Galerie d'Anatomie Comparée et de Paléontologie, and the Maison de Buffon. I walked down the rows of flowers in a mingled garden scent of roses and a barnyard smell (from the Ménagerie) of manure. I walked in an almost rural quiet. The only sounds were a distant quacking and squawking and whistling (from the Ménagerie) and (from far away in the outer world) the occasional whoop of a siren. There were benches and metal chairs along the *allées* (all of them occupied by readers or gazers or dozers), and a man in a felt hat bent over an easel. I cut around behind him, and got a glimpse of what looked like Monet's garden. The flowers that surrounded me were of every kind and range of color—like an ardent Oriental rug. There were three-inch meadows of purple ageratum, and three-foot masses of chrysanthemums and dahlias in pink and yellow and red and white and orange and lavender, and roses nurtured into six-foot trees; between the inner rows of flowers were strips of immaculate lawn, too narrow to be mowed by any means but hand—by a man on hands and knees. Apart from the roses and one or two others, the flowers all were annuals. (There were signs along the way: "PLANTES ANNUELLES DES FLEURS: DE MAI JUSQU'AUX GELÉES.") I looked at the acres and acres of flowers, the hundreds of thousands of them, the fruit of uncountable bushels of seed, and thought of spring and planting time, of the hundreds of hours of bent-back labor that made their perfection.

I came to the end of the gardens, to another massive statue, another enormous seated figure in bronze: "BUFFON / 1707-1788." I knew something of Buffon—Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. I knew of his once authoritative forty-four-volume "Histoire Naturelle." The Jardin des Plantes, as it came to international attention, was largely his creation. In 1739, when he became its overseer, it was little changed in look or purpose from its simple herbal beginnings. He added acreage, he dispatched botanical and other expeditions throughout the darkest Africas and Asias and Americas (whose harvests included the quinquina tree, the source of quinine, and the infamous coca shrub), and he laid the foundations of its present beauty. He found in one far corner of his new domain a stinking centuries-old dump and converted it into a miniature mountain, a model of eighteenth-century landscape ingenuity. He was a naturalist who was repelled by the natural world. His aim, Marguerite Duval notes in her 1977 study "La Planète des Fleurs," was to tame nature to his liking. She quotes his credo: "Brute Nature is hideous and dying; I, and I alone, can render her pleasant and living." I gazed at the giant Buffon. It was, at first glance, an entirely conventional memorial. But only at first glance. Buffon was draped in a great green weathered robe, but one arm and hand were free, and in them, cuddled to his chest, his heart, was a great green bird—part condor, perhaps, or parrot, or wild heraldic fantasy. And not only that. From beneath his chair, from beneath the mighty folds of his flowing robe, peered the head of a lion—a mild and diffident lion, a lion that could only be Bert Lahr. I consulted my guidebook for some sort of explanation. There was no mention of either bird or lion, but there was a further note. The statue had a further distinction. It was erected to Buffon in his lifetime, and he was present and approving at its unveiling.

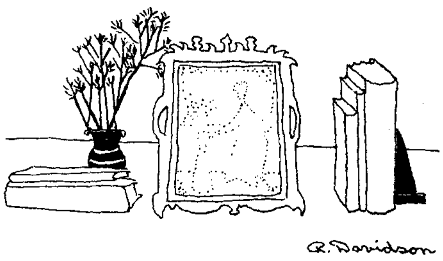
I stood and looked at Buffon and his strange companions. It was a curious feeling to stand where he had stood, had probably often stood, and to see what he himself must have seen with much gratification. Buffon and his lifetime, his lifetime of accomplishment rewarded by fame, made me think of Lamarck, at the other end of the gardens. Lamarck had stood here, too, had walked and worked and died here. But he had died scorned for his great work—his fledgling theory of evolution—where Buffon was revered for his. (Lamarck's "new piece of madness" was what the great paleontologist Georges Cuvier called it.) His worth was finally recognized (though not by Darwin) in the eighteen-eighties, and his statue dates only from 1908. Buffon by then was only history. Buffon, Lamarck, Cuvier—this was indeed a place of presences, of many presences. Linnaeus had walked here, had visited here, and so had Napoleon. The German naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt had such a feeling for the place that after the surrender of Paris in 1814 he almost single-handed prevented the occupying Prussian troops from vandalizing the gardens. Stendhal walked here (many times), and Victor Hugo, who lived in the neighborhood, walked here daily with his wife. Renoir walked here, and the Dutch pioneer plant geneticist Hugo de Vries, and Colette, and the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa ("One day each week I went to the Jardin des Plantes to see the trees and flowers of the Amazonian region"), and Joseph Losey (who filmed much of his "La Truite" in the gardens)—the whole, almost, of Paris. It was an interesting, even an exciting, thought. But it was also a little claustrophobic.

I MOVED on. I found, with my map, the École de Botanique—the modern remains of what must have been the original gardens: an acre or two devoted to the cultivation of herbs and other useful plants. And there was a new smell. I could smell the flowers from the great parterres and the manure from the Ménagerie, but I could also smell a pungency—the heated scent of rosemary and thyme and many different mints. The plant beds all were as beautifully kept as the larger beds of flowers, and the plants were identified as to kind and function—"Médicinale Textile: Cotonnier," "Alimentaire: Concombre," "Médicinale Toxique: Belladone," "Médicinale Condimentaire: Cumin." At the end of the École de Botanique were the Allée de Jussieu and the beginning of the Parc Écologique. I followed a winding woodland path through woods—woods of natural density, of natural growth, but composed entirely of superior specimens of indigenous trees and shrubs. The end of the Parc Écologique became the Carré Brongniart. This was a little grove of Judas trees (*Cercis siliquastrum*), planted by Buffon in 1785, which framed another monumental statue. It was also monumentally dramatic. It depicted, in bronze, a giant, half-naked savage in deadly combat with an even more gigantic bear. The man had thrust a knife deep into the throat of the bear, but the bear was crushing the man in a lethal hug. The cause of it all was hanging from the man's belt: a tiny, lifeless cub. It was a powerful work, but a peculiar work, too, and it made me wonder. This was nature, all right. It was, however, nature very far from that preferred by Buffon.

My guidebook showed a Jardin d'Iris, described as one of the glories of the place, near the Laboratoire de Cryptogamie. I found it easily enough, but I should have known: I could only imagine its beauty. The iris season is May. There were cries and giggles up ahead. I came to a class of small children sprawled on a sunny patch of perfect lawn. All the girls wore calf-length dresses, and all the boys wore calf-length trousers (they looked like little Tom Sawyers), and all of them were munching tomatoes. I reëntered the chestnut tunnel, and wondered if it might have been here, in one of these *allées*, that Jules Renard made his discovery that "shadow lives only in light." I came to an open-air café—the French equivalent of a snack bar in an American public park—with an appetizing menu chalked on a slate ("*Entrecôte et Frites, Saucisson et Frites, Omelette et Frites, Croque Monsieur, Hod dog*"), but also a sign: "FERMÉ." I found an ancient tree—the oldest tree, in fact, in Paris: Le Robinier. It was (my guidebook noted) a black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), grown from a seedling found in Louisiana and planted, in 1601, on the Place Dauphin, by one Vespasien Robin, and then transplanted by him to its present site in 1635. Most black locusts growing today in Europe are (according to Marguerite Duval) its progeny. It was impressively decrepit: a heavy stump with a thicket of writhing branches artfully propped and crutched. It looked old, very old, but it looked good for another century or two. I found Buffon's house, a small château in the style of his time, preserved not (as might be expected) as a museum but as a dingy office building, closed to the public. There was an open gateway beyond the house. I went through, and found myself on a busy street, on the Rue Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. It was past noon. It was time for lunch. I headed up the street. There would be a restaurant somewhere near. There always is in Paris.

I FOUND one at the end of a long and crowded block of student bars and bakeries and pizza parlors. It was a bistro called Le Buisson Ardent, which is cited (I later learned) with some respect by Gault Millau. The clientele was largely academic—serious men and women of middle age from the university. They were also serious about lunch. I sat with my confit of duck (a specialty of the house) and a *pichet* of Côtes du Rhône, and watched them come and go. Everyone had his apéritif—his Suze or Ricard or Kir. Everyone had his entrée. Everyone had his main course, with wine. Everyone had his cheese or dessert, or both. Everyone had his coffee. Everyone had his *digestif*—his cognac or mirabelle or poire. Everyone smoked from start to finish. I also noticed here and there a curious gesture. The arm was stretched out, the wrist limp and dangling, then the hand vigorously shaken. It was a gesture I had never seen before, but its meaning was clear enough. Negative.

I RETURNED to the Jardin des Plantes by still another gate—a mere break in the wall on the Rue Cuvier. I came in past the Maison de Cuvier, a château much like Buffon's and, like his, now an office building. This was an area of broad lawns and occasional well-grown trees. None of them (my book explained) was an ordinary tree. Each was a specimen, and each had its identifying plaque: species, place of origin, date. One of them—a great plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*), India, 1785—overhung still another statue of monumental size: "BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE / 1737-1814." I knew about Bernardin. He was Rousseau's chief disciple and the author of "Paul et Virginie," the feverish novella that did much to set the Romantic Movement in motion. But what was he doing here? My book explained. He was, like so many others of his time, a man of protean interests: he served a term as intendant of the gardens. There was a sign to his left: "GRAND LABYRINTHE." And an arrow pointing up a winding wooded path. This was Buffon's transmogrified dump. The sign led me past a famous tree (*Cèdre du Liban*) brought back from England by Buffon's colleague Bernard de Jussieu in 1733. (A once widely held belief related that the tree was brought back from Syria, and that it was kept alive by daily watering from de Jussieu's ration.) It was a good big tree, with a spreading canopy of feathery leaves and a bench around its considerable girth, which was occupied, as I passed, by a young man smoking a marijuana cigarette. I followed the path—and emerged in the shadow of Bernardin and "GRAND LABYRINTHE." I tried again: up past the ancient cedar, past a brown stone obelisk ("DAUBENTON / 1716-1799 / PREMIER DIRECTEUR DU MUSÉUM D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE"), around a turn, and down a steep slope—and into the shadow of Bernardin. I then began to pay attention, and made it to the top—to a kind of gazebo, an openwork wrought-iron kiosk with a jaunty iron cupola. My guidebook spoke of a view, but that would have been an eighteenth-century phenomenon. My view was a sea of treetops. But the kiosk ("LA GLORIETTE DE BUFFON") was itself a view. It was built in 1788, the year of Buffon's death, by an architect named Verniquet, and it was the first iron structure built in France, predating the Eiffel Tower by a hundred and one years.



The Labyrinthe remained a labyrinth. I left the kiosk by the way I thought I had come, but that meant nothing. I never saw Bernardin again, but I did emerge from the maze, some minutes later, between two great, domed, multipaned greenhouses steaming with tropical plants. These, Duval reports, were the progeny of one designed by Fagon: “One day, Fagon’s assistant, Sebastien Vaillant, a talented botanist, received a coffee seedling from Leyden. In order that it might survive, he made, following the suggestions of his Dutch friends, a small glass house ‘tall enough for a shrub.’ Inspired by this, Fagon immediately ordered built not a small house but vast ventilated glass buildings, heated by pipes. Greenhouses were born.” In the distance, in the near distance, sat Buffon. But there was a sign that pointed elsewhere: “ADMINISTRATION.” I followed it to another converted château. There, by good fortune, I met a woman with a smattering of English (French is easier read than spoken, and easier spoken than understood), who directed me to still another converted château, to the “RELATIONS EXTÉRIEURES ET SERVICE DE PRESSE,” to Geneviève Boulinier.

MME. BOULINIER is young and beautiful and enthusiastic and fluent in English. “So!” she told me. “You are American! And you are here in the beautiful gardens. So now you will tell me what you have seen and how I can help. *Bon! Bon! Très bon!* Most excellent! You have seen the famous sequoia—or, at least, its cross-section? An ancient tree of California that was born before Jesus Christ. It died in 1898. You must see it. It was the gift of America.

“You have seen the Jardin Alpin, the garden of mountain plants? But no! It is closed. The season is over. In the spring, it is all in bloom. So much color. So beautiful. Now, let me think. There is the Ménagerie. Not yet? You must visit there before you go. That is a promise. It is old-fashioned and not large. But it is charming. There are many stories. You know of Bernardin—Bernardin de Saint-Pierre? It was he who began the Ménagerie. It was after the Revolution, in 1793, in the time of the First Republic. He was then the intendant of the garden. Before the Revolution, there were only private menageries—at Versailles and at the châteaus of the nobles. Bernardin removed those menageries to the Jardin des Plantes for the people to enjoy. There were also at that time what were called circuses in Paris. These were the street entertainers—the men with the dancing bears and the trained monkeys. Bernardin had the circuses made illegal, and the animals were brought to the Ménagerie.

“There is a famous Ménagerie story. This was in 1826 and 1827, in the time of Charles X. The Viceroy of Egypt wished to make a gift to France, and he chose a giraffe. A giraffe in France at that time was *exotique*. No one in France had ever seen such an animal. So it was arranged. It was to come to the Jardin des Plantes, to the Ménagerie. There was great excitement. The plan was for the giraffe to sail by ship from Alexandria to Marseilles, and from Marseilles it was to walk to Paris. A staff was assembled: an Egyptian stableman and three Sudan assistants—and three cows to provide milk for it to eat. Giraffes eat much—twenty-five litres of milk every day. The giraffe landed in Marseilles on October 23rd, and it was decided that it should spend the winter there. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire came from Paris to meet the giraffe, and he designed for it a raincoat to keep it warm and dry until the spring. On May 20, 1827, the walk to Paris began. The first night was spent at Aix. There were crowds along the way to pay welcome. There were crowds at every little town along the way. The giraffe reached Lyons on June 6th. There was a celebration in the Place Bellecour. Many people had come from Paris for the great event. Stendhal was one of these. On June 30th, at sunset, the famous giraffe entered Paris. It rested, and then marched across Paris to Saint-Cloud, to be viewed by the King. Then it marched back again, to the Ménagerie. The giraffe was the talk of Paris. Six hundred thousand people visited the Ménagerie to see the giraffe that summer. It became high fashion. It had an influence on the couturiers, and there were songs and poems written about it. The giraffe lived long—until the day of January 12, 1845. It was not replaced. It was thought to be too famous. But it lived long in memory. In every French town through which the giraffe had passed on its famous walk, there was named in its honor a street or a square. I think there are many towns where you will still find a Rue de la Girafe or a Place de la Girafe. There was once a Rue de la Girafe even here in Paris.”

I CAME upon the ancient sequoia on my way to the Ménagerie. It was much as Mme. Boulinier had said. The cross-section was around ten feet in diameter and ten inches thick, and it stood on its edge behind a protective wrought-iron fence. A plaque identi-

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fied certain historic events ("PREMIÈRE CROISADE, 1039") through which the tree had lived. The last ring, the ring of 1898, was remembered by its distant donors as "GUERRE HISPANO-AMÉRICAIN." The entrance to the Ménagerie was off the Allée Cuvier. I bought a ticket (thirteen francs) and walked up a flowery, tree-lined path between a hilly enclosure containing four pacing wolves and a sunny field containing what looked like four overturned wheelbarrows. A sign said "TORTUE ELÉPHANTINE." The biggest of the giant turtles stirred, its head protruded, it snipped a tiny blade of grass, methodically munched, withdrew its head, and became again an old, abandoned wheelbarrow. Beyond the turtles was an open field (fenced but open to the sky) of noisy ducks and parading geese and opportunistic visiting gulls and sparrows, and standing alone was an ostrich that looked (as Jules Renard once wrote) exactly like a giant chick. The path continued to wind through specimen trees and gardens of flowers and widely spaced and unobtrusive enclosures. If this was an old-fashioned zoo, it was years before my time. The zoos that I remembered all had an institutional look. I came to the "FAUVERIE." Rilke—Rainer Maria Rilke—had walked here, and had remembered the occasion in one of his late poems, "Der Panther, Im Jardin des Plantes, Paris." But that had been seventy years ago, or more. I passed a black leopard, and then a black jaguar. Rilke's panther, of course, was long gone. I came to a larger cage. It was furnished with a high, rocky cliff and two waiting lions—a male and a female—outstretched. They seemed to have been waiting for me. They gave me a glance, and then a grunt. They stood up, growling. They stood higher, poised on the very brink of the cliff, and roared. And roared. And roared. It had every mark of a performance. And the moment I took a step, the moment I started to move away, they gave one more awful roar and lay peacefully back on their rock.

I came to an aviary—screeches, movement, color—and a workman climbing out of a miniature pickup truck. He unloaded a couple of bags of seed and a couple of boxes of carrots and two big crates of lettuce. The seeds were merely seeds, a dusty anonymous mixture. But the carrots! They were a glowing golden yellow and perfectly shaped and matched, as if by hand. And the lettuces! They were great, green leafy bunches of a freshness almost dewy. I stood in wonder. This was what one might expect to see in the markets around the Madeleine or along the Rue de Buci. I watched the workman hoist a box of peerless carrots and carry it in to the waiting birds.

I came to a statue in a convergence of paths. It was a kind of mate to the naked man and the bear. It depicted another naked man in massive bronze—a grinning man of the Stone Age, holding exultantly aloft the bloody head of a tiger. I had wondered about the death struggle in the peaceful Judas grove. This was even more peculiar. I wondered who could have chosen so ferocious, so inapposite, a sculpture to grace the peaceful Ménagerie. Was this a revelation of Gallic insensitivity? Or was it a Gallic subtlety? Was it a metaphor? The Stone Age man was a brutal killer of wild animals. Modern man was their keeper. I treated myself to a Gallic shrug, and moved on.

IT was getting late, and I was getting tired. I had hardly sat down all day except at lunch and in Mme. Boulinier's office. But I wanted to see the bear pit. I have a fondness for bears. I am of the generation that met them first as toys, as Teddy bears. And there it was, just ahead: "FOSSES AUX OURS." And, as I came closer, "OURS BRUN." I looked down through a barrier of bars to a pit of rocks and caverns and a branched dead tree and a trickling rivulet. A big brown bear was asleep in a corner. A second big bear was trudging. A small bear emerged from one of the caves.

A voice behind me said, "Ooh!"

I turned. It was a little boy, with a man I took to be his father.

"Ooh!" the little boy said again. "*Regardez! Nounours!*"

I looked at him kindly. *Nounours* means much the same as Teddy bear.

"*Oui*," the man said. He gave me a smiling look. "*Il s'appelle Martin.*"

"*Martin?*" I said. I went on as best I could. "*Le ours est nom Martin?*"

"*Oui*," he said. He laughed. "*Tous les ours s'appellent Martin.*"

"Oh?" I said. "*Pourquoi?*"

The man gave a real Gallic shrug. "*Le premier ours à la Ménagerie s'est appellé Martin.*"

I looked down at the three bears. I said, "*Bonjour, Martin.*"

"*Non*," the little boy said. "*Pas Martin. Il s'appelle Nounours.*"

—BERTON ROUECHÉ

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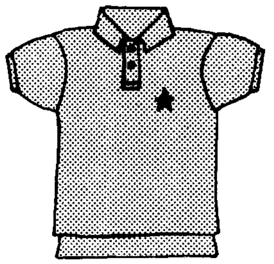

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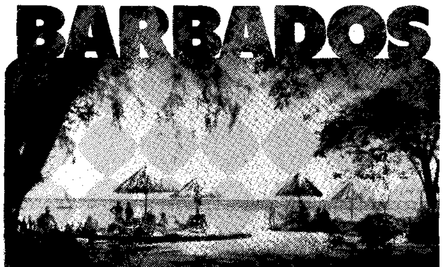

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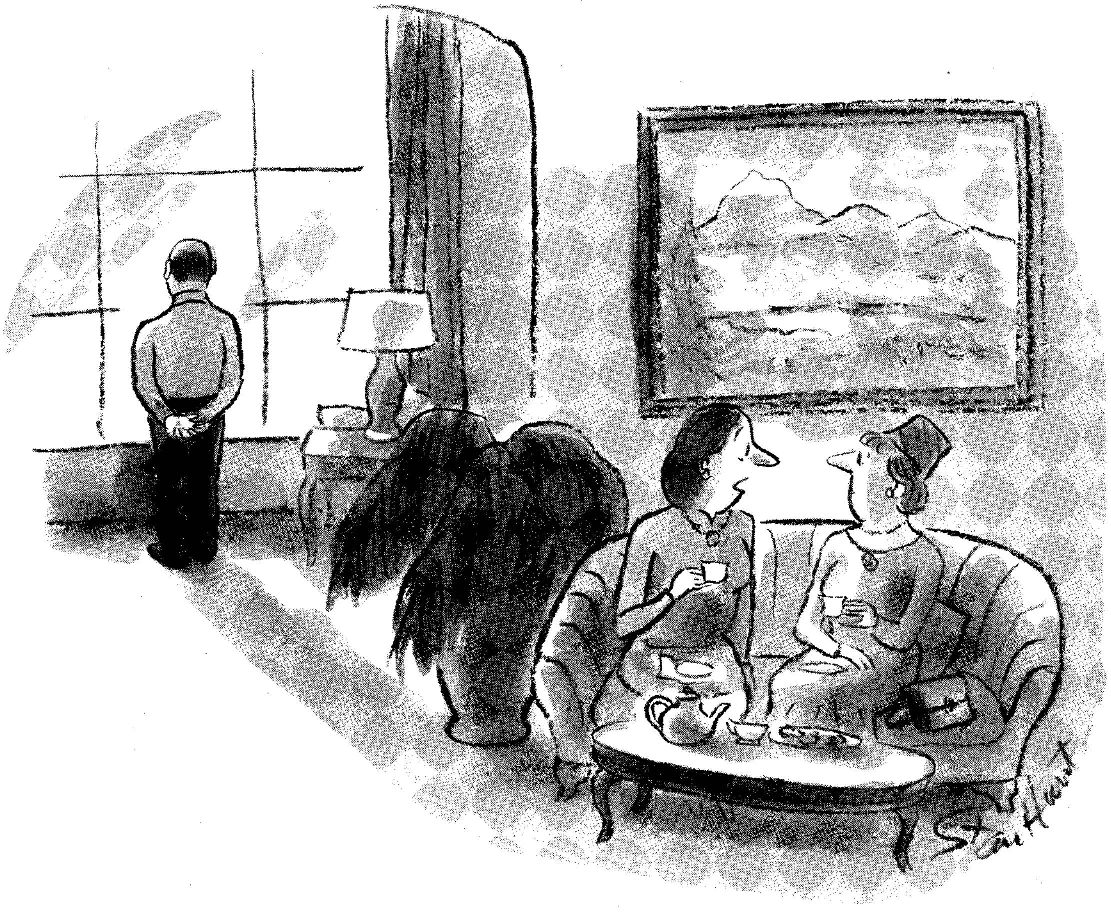
JAZZ

Bob's Your Uncle

THE brilliant blind pianist George Shearing doesn't like his listeners to get too close. During the first part of his career—in England, where he was born, in 1919—he hid behind the styles of other pianists. He was considered England's Meade Lux Lewis, England's Art Tatum, England's Teddy Wilson. In the second part of his career, which began in the late forties, just after he settled in this country, he disappeared inside his smooth, famous quintet (vibraphone, guitar, piano, bass, and drums), emerging occasionally for a solo chorus but in general restricting himself to sixteen or twenty-four bars. The disguises he has used in the third part of his career, which started in the late seventies, when he gave up his quintet, are his most refined. He now works in a duo with a bassist (the Canadian Don Thompson), but he is no more accessible than he ever was. He has long been thought of as a jazz pianist, but he is apt these days to play Kurt Weill's "Mack the Knife" at a very slow tempo, clothing it with thick Bartók chords. Or he will play the "Moonlight" Sonata straight for sixteen or twenty bars (he is an excellent classical pianist), and then, in the same tempo and using Beethoven harmonies, slip seamlessly into Cole Porter's "Night and Day," staying with it à la Beethoven for a chorus or so before easing back into the sonata. He will play Porter's "Do I Love You" in Mozart fashion, and his own indestructible "Lullaby of Birdland" as a Bach fugue. Or he will do a sorrowing, almost chanting rendition of Jobim's "How Insensitive," and give Alec Wilder's "While We're Young" a full-scale ballad treatment, filling it with substitute chords and Art Tatum decorations. What is always present, though impishly concealed, is a superlative pianist, who can play Mozart with a feathery correctness, then improvise with swinging abandon. Shearing has a beautiful touch, which falls somewhere between the sparkle of Nat Cole and the buoyancy of Art Tatum. His jazzlike playing is colored by Teddy Wilson and Hank Jones and Erroll Garner and Bud Powell, but he does not have a style in the conventional sense. He has perfected a unique *sound*, a kind of handsome aural presence, made up of his airborne tone; his wit (he has a pleasant, slightly foggy tenor, and he puts words to "I Can't Get Started" which go, "When I first met Benny G., He said, 'Hi, Teddy,' to me"); his extraordinary harmonic sense; and his refusal to use pianistic clichés. Shearing recently talked about his playing in his apartment, which is in the East Eighties:

"When I sit down at the piano, I make sure my stool is in front of middle C," he said. "Then I know I have three Cs on my left and four on my right. I have my seven octaves, and I know just where I am and where I can go. I've heard too many players slog the piano. I feel sorry for an instrument that is brutally treated. I love tone production—connecting my notes so that they sing, instead of coming out clump-clump-clump. When you improvise, in addition to your tone production you must have a musical atmosphere in your head—a musical climate. You must have compounds of scales and arpeggios to fit the chords you improvise on. Sometimes as I improvise I hear a horn in my head, or an alto or a tenor saxophone, or a flugelhorn. On a slow ballad, I hear Hank Jones, who is so good he should be deported. The gift of improvisation is being able to weave from one chord to another. It's a question of immediately getting what's in your mind into your fingers. If you could explain it, which I can't, all the surprise and spontaneity and unexpectedness would disappear.

"I no longer wish to work all the time. My ears get tired. I want to play bridge with my wife, Ellie. I want to work on my VersaBraille computer. I want to build up my compact-disk library. I want to do more disk-



"Morrison, you know, has always had extremely sound judgment, but he has never had occasion to exercise it."

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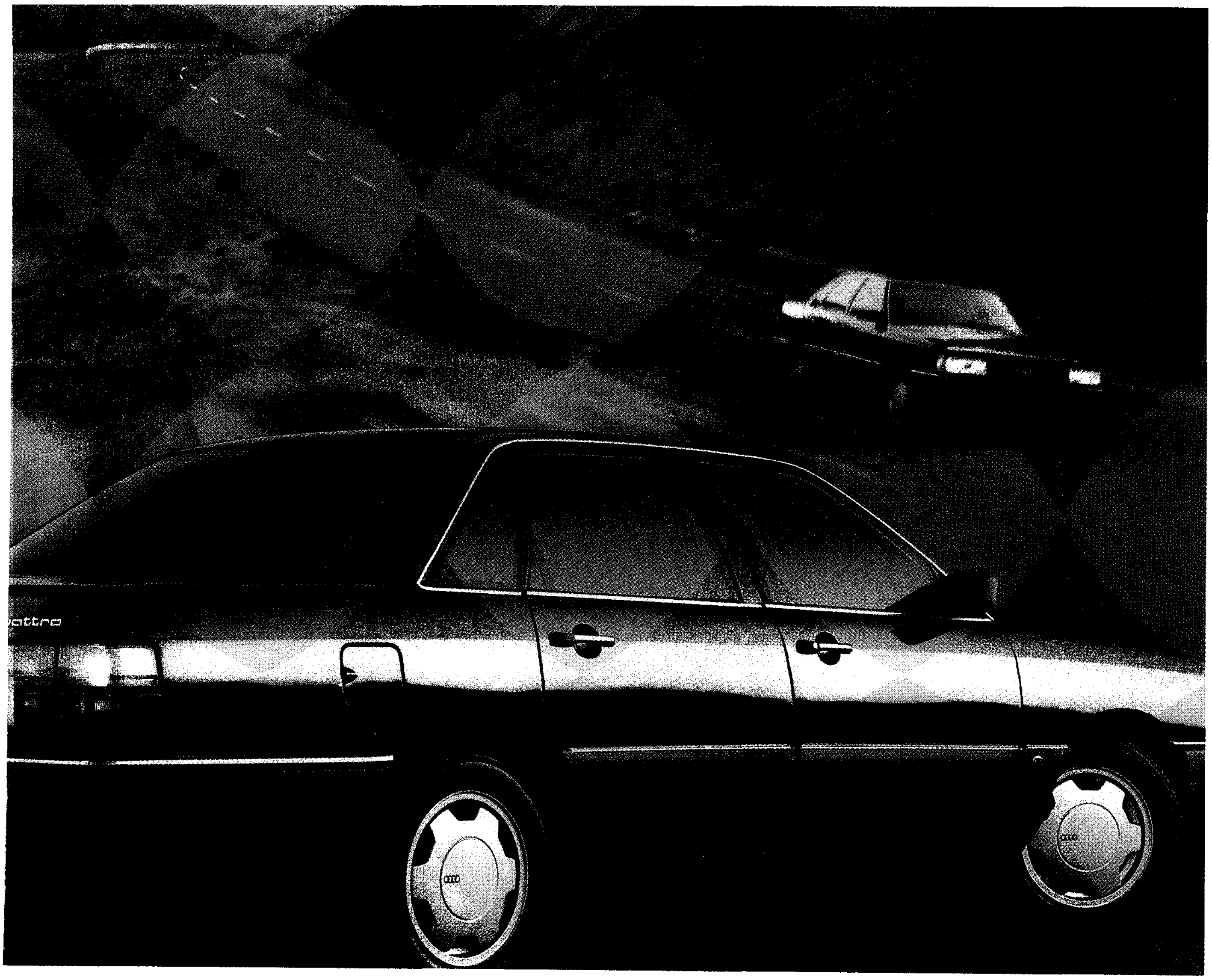

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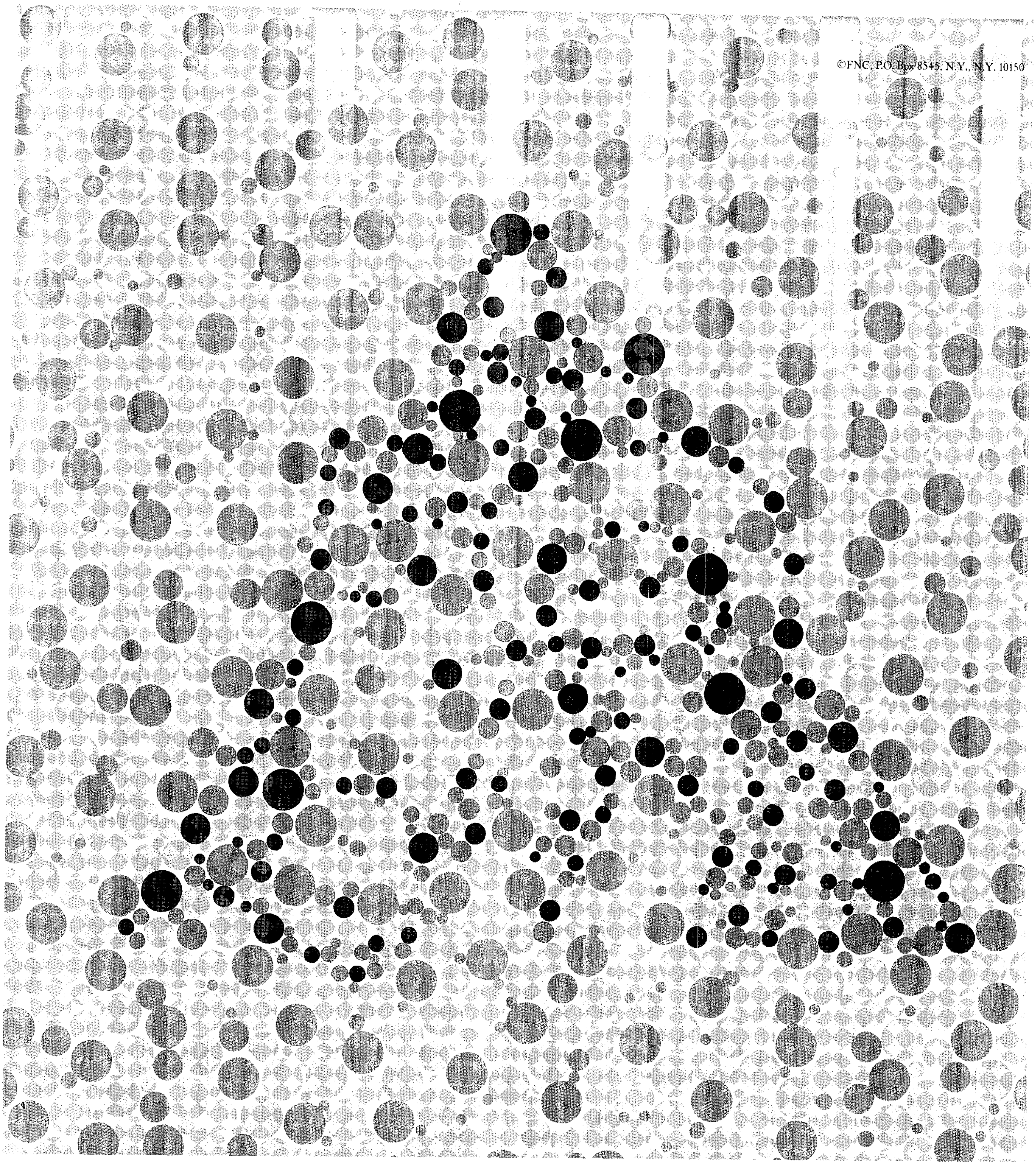

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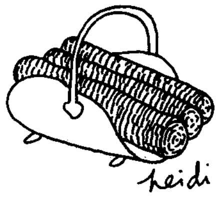
ockeying. I want to ride my tandem ike. Eventually, I probably won't lay in public anymore, but I'll cerainly play here."

DURING the past eight or nine years, Shearing and his bassist ave frequently joined forces with the inger-composer-instrumentalist Mel Tormé and his drummer, Donny Osorne, and they have developed an ffortless and engaging act. Shearing ccompanies Tormé's singing, Tormé lays piano with Shearing, Shearing ings by himself and with Tormé, Tormé plays drums with Shearing. Tormé has said this about Shearing:

"I call George the Master. He is a blissful, constant surprise musically. When we do two performances in an evening of songs like 'Star Dust' and 'Dream Dancing,' each version George plays is a spontaneous and exquisite work of art. He's got a marvellous facility for inventing substitute chords in great songs. A lot of pianists use substitute chords simply to call attention to themselves, but George does it to enhance and embellish the song. Add to that the incredible warehouse in his brain of classical music and of popular songs that no one else has ever heard of. He's a lovely man, and the only time I have seen him irascible is when people around him don't do their job right. The last time we worked together, he played a solo number in which he got softer and softer, creating a hypnotic delicacy and quietude. When he was almost beneath hearing, the sound man suddenly turned up the volume, wrecking everything. George made his feelings plain after the show."

Shearing has also worked often with Marian McPartland, his old friend and compatriot. She said the other day, "I first heard George in 1948 or 1949, at a club called the Silhouette, in Evanston, Illinois. He had his original quintet, with Denzil Best on drums and Marjorie Hyams on vibes and Chuck Wayne on guitar and John Levy on bass. It was, of course, a mixed group, and whenever George was asked about it he'd say, 'I don't know what color they are. I'm blind.' Without question, he's a genius. Every time I hear him or play with him, I rediscover how much music of all kinds he's absorbed. And he writes wonderful music—tunes like 'Lullaby of Birdland' and 'Conception,' which has a bebop melodic line as good as any Charlie Parker wrote. And there's 'Changin' with the Times,' and 'Bop's Your Uncle,' which is a play on the old English expression 'Bob's your uncle,' which means everything is O.K. He loves to joke around and laugh. I've played with him, and he'll put you on the spot by suddenly changing keys or going into a different style. And his puns are famous. It's hard to think of him as blind, because he constantly challenges himself. Sometimes I'm embarrassed to be around him and hear him talk about all the things he's doing outside of music. We've confided in each other at different times. George knows things about me that no one else does, and I probably know secrets about him."

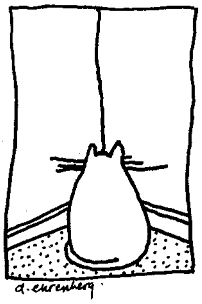
SHEARING lives with his wife in a comfortable, modern apartment. It has a sunken living room with yellow walls, an oatmeal wall-to-wall carpet, a fireplace, a Bösendorfer grand piano, an Eames chair, a wall of Braille books, and a marble head of Shearing by Ben Deane. Shearing's workroom, just off the foyer, contains two side-by-side upright pianos, his Braille word processor, all kinds of sound equipment, and a reclining chair that vibrates, massages your back, and plays tapes of birds singing in a ruined English abbey. Ellie Shearing is an excellent cook, and her sit-in kitchen has a six-burner electric stove and a plate warmer built into a wall. Shearing has a portable floor-to-ceiling temperature-controlled wine cellar in one corner, and in it are Château Lafite-Rothschild, Acacia Chardonnay, Fetzer Zinfandel, and Beaulieu Vineyard's Georges de Latour Private Reserve. (Shearing still marvels at the time he invited the jazz producer and oenophile George Wein to dinner and gave him, as a test, a decanted bottle of the Georges de Latour, vintage 1970. Wein took two sips and named the vineyard, the wine, and the year.) The apartment also has a stately dining room and a bedroom. Shearing moves around a lot, and when Ellie Shearing rings the lunch bell he travels the fifty feet or so from the living room to the kitchen in about three seconds. He also likes to lie flat in his Eames chair and talk, his hands crossed on his stomach. This is what he said one afternoon not long ago:



"Blindness is more of a nuisance than a handicap. People say they forget I'm blind, and that's the best compliment they can pay me. I have no desire to live a single day in an undignified way. I was born blind, and when I was a kid in London I used to go everywhere by myself. I went on the road with my quintet for ten years with guide dogs. It was one of the most enlightening experiences of my life. Maybe I'm a devout coward on the road, but I like my hotel rooms if possible to have the bathroom on the left, two chairs with a table between them, and a closet and bureau on the right. I can distinguish light and dark, and I like the window to be in front of me when I enter. An empty room is full of acoustics. In a full room, like this, sound dies. I have to snap my fingers in a full room that I don't know to find out when I'm approaching a wall or a bookcase. This is called facial vision. The movement of air is important. I can tell where people are around me simply by the way they displace the air. I think of sound as the vibration of air, and I think of color—I really don't know what color looks like—as the vibration of light. I used to travel by myself in New York taxis, but I don't much anymore, because you never know where you will end up. In general, getting around New York is wonderful, because of the grid pattern and the sharp corners. It's harder to lose your sight during your life than to be born blind. If you nurse the impairment, though, you'll be a pathetic blind man rather than a productive one. A sense of humor never hurts. Once, Ellie and I were waiting for a table in a local restaurant. It was very crowded, and a waitress carrying a huge tray of empty dishes tried to squeeze between Ellie and me. I didn't know what was happening, and I had my arm through Ellie's. The waitress said, 'Hey, what's the matter with you? Are you blind?' I said, 'As a matter of fact, I am.' Ellie said she will never forget the expression on the woman's face."

Shearing laughs a lot, and it loosens his imposing looks. He has a beaky nose, a high forehead, and grayish hair. He tilts his head up slightly when he is listening. Shearing stopped talking, sat up, stood, and, turning, went quickly up the living-room steps, across the foyer, and into his workroom. He talked as he went. "I've started writing some memoirs," he said, "and I'd like to read aloud what I've done. I've finished the first chapter, and begun the second." He sat down at his VersaBraille machine and began to read, his fingers moving over a Braille tape. Here is some of what he read:

"It appears that at the age of three I made gallant but improper attempts at producing music. I used to hit the piano with a hammer. The Shillington Street School, where I went, was in Battersea, in southwest London. The area was known as the Latchmere, so called because of a well-known pub, which benefitted from the same handle. This was just one of many pubs dotted around the neighborhood in case the inhabitants got thirsty. And, regrettably, they did. On numerous occasions, children would be heard crying outside pubs while adults inside were doing their level best to get to be the way I was born. It is with sadness that I relate the fact that my mother was a serious contestant. My mother, however, did her very best to keep these miseries at a minimum after I was born. Almost everything was purchased by the Y.P. method (Yours Perhaps). The installment collector was known as the tallyman. He would appear every week to collect his money. More often than not, he would be greeted with a friendly 'I'll see you next week.' This rather unpleasant task was often foisted upon one of us kids. In which case, it would be 'Mum will see you next week.' Purchases would be made far in excess of what would seem necessary, so that we could have collateral to borrow money to buy more, to have collateral to borrow, and so on.



"Dad was a coal man. This meant that his job was to carry as heavy a load as possible from his horse and cart to a private home or a place of business. He would leave home at about 6 A.M. and return about the same hour P.M. He worked for the same firm for three months short of fifty years and received the equivalent of twelve dollars a week. He got to retire on a handsome pension of a dollar a week. Like all working-class Englishmen, he was very proud. In my teens, when I thought of changing jobs, my dad would say, 'Why do you want to do that, son? The boss has been good to you.' I could never understand why paying me my hard-earned salary was being good to me. But through all this seeming consideration of management Dad was a very strong Labour man. He used to take me to the park on Sunday afternoons to hear some guy speaking in favor of Labour and, at times, for or against Communism. When no such oratory was to be found, we would witness part of a cricket match. Of course, we were never late home for afternoon tea, which would consist of watercress sandwiches and wonderful cake made by my mother.

"Were I more adept at putting things in their proper order, I would have saved some of the sweetness of the foregoing lines to lessen the depression of some of those to come. I remember the sound of rats scampering across the linoleum floor and the sound of my dad's boot trying to hit and kill them. I remember women begging their husbands not to get in a fight outside a pub when they had had too much to drink.

"Let's take a brief glimpse at my mother's life. Dad was earning a poverty-line salary. Mother had nine kids to raise, so she took care of the family during the day and cleaned railway trains at night. It's no wonder she tried to abort me—the youngest of the family. And no wonder I became blind in the process. Although she tried drowning her sorrows in drink, I feel that she really had a guilty conscience about my position and did her very best to repent.

"To this day, I am grateful that blind children were required to spend four years in residential school between the ages of twelve and sixteen. Linden Lodge was the name of the school I attended. Although it could not be counted among the twenty most beautiful residences in England, we had wonderful grounds, with a lawn, flowers, tennis courts for the staff, football and cricket fields, and all the things a little boy from Battersea didn't know existed. Cricket and football were played in the open air only by the partly sighted children. We blind kids played handball by using a football with a bell on it. Cricket was played inside by using a fair-sized balloon with a bell on it."

Shearing got up and went back into the living room and sat in his Eames chair. "That's all I've written so far," he said. He crossed his hands on his stomach. "I learned my Bach and Liszt and studied music theory at the Lodge. When I graduated, I went straight to work in a pub. A year or so later, I joined Claude Bampton's All-Blind Band. It was sponsored by the Royal National Institute for the Blind, and had been put together under the aegis of the bandleader Jack Hylton. There were fifteen of us, and we played Jimmie Lunceford and Benny Carter and Duke Ellington. We carried our own rostrum, and six grand pianos for the finale. Our suits were from Hawes & Curtis, on Savile Row. None of the bands of top condition would have dreamed of surrounding themselves with such glamour. Our leader was sighted, and he used a huge baton, which went swish, swish and told us what was what. Our music had been transcribed into Braille. We played all the major theatres in England and Scotland, and the tour lasted almost a year. I had my first contact with jazz in that band. Someone would pick up the new Armstrong or Berigan or Tatum record and say, 'Here's the new sender'—a good musician being known at the time as a solid sender. Through the band, I met Leonard Feather, who lived in London, and he helped me get recording dates and radio broadcasts. In 1941, I married my first wife, Trixie. I'd met her in an air-raid shelter where I used to play four-handed piano with the song plugger I was rooming with. Trixie and I had a daughter, Wendy, who now lives in North Hollywood. I had three or four jobs at once during the war—in theatres, supper clubs, jazz clubs. I had my own little band, and I also worked for the bandleader Ambrose. I toured a lot with Stéphane Grappelli, who spent the war in London. My mother was bombed out three times. We were Cockneys, and Cockneys tell jokes all the time. I remember one: This bloke says to his wife, 'Come on, Liza, the siren just went off.' She says, 'Hold it, Alf. I'm looking for my teeth.' And he says, 'Never mind that. They're dropping bombs, not sandwiches.' Around this time, I heard a recording of me speaking, and that told me I should do something about my Cockney accent. One time, I came home from school and my mother asked me what I had studied and I said, 'Six pieces of suet.' Or that's what she thought I had said. When she saw the teacher next, she asked her why we had been studying suet, and the teacher said the subject was 'Seek peace and pursue it.' Ellie tells me that when we visit London I revert to my old accent, and that if we stayed long enough she wouldn't understand a word I said. And when I see Grappelli I start talking like him: 'Stéphane, we go eat now.' I saved some money during the war, and in 1946 I visited New York. American musicians like Mel Powell and Glenn Miller had told me in England that I would kill them over here. I wasn't sure. Why would they want England's Teddy Wilson when they had the genuine article? But I liked New York so much I came back for good the next year.

“My first job was at the Onyx Club, on Fifty-second Street. I was the intermission pianist for Sarah Vaughan. I would be announced—‘Ladies and gentlemen, from England the new and exciting pianist George Shearing’—and somebody would yell, ‘Where's Sarah?’ Then I spelled Ella Fitzgerald at the Three Deuces. She had Hank Jones and Ray Brown and Charlie Smith with her. When Hank took a night off, I played for Ella. I began to be asked to sit in on the Street, and Charlie Parker took me for walks between shows. Leonard Feather had moved to New York, and he introduced me to people and arranged gigs for me. In 1948, I played the old Clique Club, at Forty-ninth Street and Broadway, with Buddy De Franco on clarinet and John Levy and Denzil Best on bass and drums. We broke up after the engagement, and Leonard suggested I keep Best and Levy and add Marjorie Hyams on vibraphone and Chuck Wayne on guitar. I did some arrangements. Marjorie did some. We used a unison-octave voicing, like Glenn Miller's reed section. Our first New York gig was at Café Society Downtown, for six hundred and ninety-five dollars a week. We did the Blue Note in Chicago, and then the Embers and Birdland in New York—and the quintet took off. It lasted twenty-nine years, and a lot of wonderful musicians passed through—Cal Tjader and Gary Burton on vibes, Joe Pass and Toots Thielemans on guitar, Ralph Pena and Al McKibbon on bass, Charli Persip on drums. Toward the end, we travelled in a twenty-six-foot motor home with nine airplane seats and a couch and a refrigerator. On our last big tour, in the seventies, we did fifty-six concerts in sixty-three days, and I think that's what finally did me in.”

Ellie Shearing brought in a tea tray and sat down. “Is that tea, Ellie?” Shearing asked. She said yes, and he made appreciative noises and said he would like a sugar and a half and enough milk to color his tea. “When I first came to this country,” he said, “I couldn't believe what you got in a restaurant when you ordered tea. A cup of water that had never come to a boil and a tea bag sitting in the saucer. I'd tell the waitress, ‘The water was good for my indigestion, now please bring me some tea.’ ” Shearing drank his tea quickly and excused himself, saying he wanted to get on with the next chapter of his memoirs. Ellie Shearing reminded him that they were supposed to have dinner at the Harvard Club with an old friend. She is trim and pretty and full of laughter. She has a long face, a wide smile, and auburn hair, tightly swept back. Her voice is big and carries easily around the apartment's corners. She is a quick, energetic talker.

“I marvel at the differences between George's and my background—at the fact that we ever came together,” she said. “I was born in Harvey, Illinois, on August 22, 1932. My father was a Lutheran minister who had the same church—the first church he was given—for fifty-two years. His name was Rudolf Geffert, and he was born in Reed City, Michigan, the oldest of nine children. His father and his father's father were Lutheran ministers. He was short and dark and quiet, with a dry sense of humor. He did the Chicago *Tribune* crossword puzzle at breakfast, and he liked to translate Hebrew and Greek into English just for fun. I had three older brothers, and my mother did most of the raising of the children. Her name was Meta Hackbarth. She was little and always overweight, and she was a good plain cook. I was grown before I learned that all food wasn't fried and gray. She was well liked by the congregation, even though she had no patience for small-mindedness. She was born in Wausau, Wisconsin, and raised on a farm, and she hated it. To get away, she went to a normal school and became a teacher. After high school, I spent two years at Thornton Junior College and three at DePauw University. I was a piano major and a voice minor. I graduated in 1955, and my first job was writing radio commercials at WSBT, in South Bend. My second job was running a radio talk show in Niles, Michigan. Then I taught choir at a junior high school in East Grand Rapids. The next summer, I got into summer stock in New England through my old high-school speech teacher, Mae Sexauer. My mother was livid when she found out: her only daughter going on the wicked stage. She told me that I would bring shame

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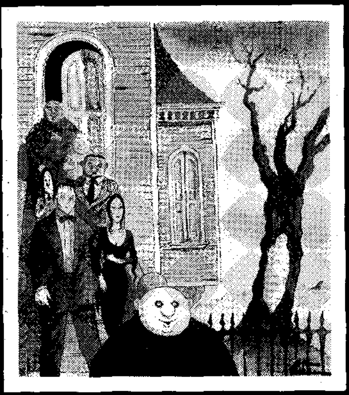

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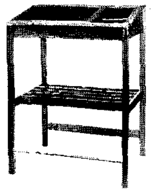

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on the family, that she'd disown me. But she eventually came to see me. After summer stock, I got a little apartment in New York, on Thirteenth Street between Avenues A and B, and I taught music in a high school out in Levittown. I worked one summer in 'Around the World in Eighty Days' at Jones Beach, and I was in 'To Broadway with Love,' a spectacle that ran at the Texas Pavilion during the 1964 World's Fair. I had been doing choral work around town, and I auditioned for Norman Luboff and was his alto soloist for three years. In 1967, Norman told me I should go to Hollywood and work in the studios, and I did that for four years. I kept body and soul together by teaching remedial reading in the Hollywood public schools. One of my students was a ten-year-old who had lived in communes all over the West. He could shoot, skin a deer, and make deerskin clothes, but he couldn't tell an 'A' from a 'B.' Within six months, he was reading at third-grade level. I told him I looked forward to teaching him the next year, and he said, 'I'm sorry, Miss Geffert, but my parents are moving again, and I don't know where I'll be.'

"I met George in 1971, at a Christmas party at his place in San Francisco. He was married, and I was dating someone regularly. We didn't see each other again for two years. By that time, George was divorced from Trixie, and we began housekeeping. We were married in 1984, in my dad's church. One of my brothers, who's a minister, performed the ceremony. When George and I started living together, I had been alone for a long time. I had to learn not to leave doors half open, not to kick my boots off in the middle of the room, not to not put things back after I had used them. George is very independent. He does not expect to be waited on. He's very sensitive, both emotionally and physically. His fingers are so delicate that he can feel dust on a table. Living with George can be difficult—sometimes on the road we're together twenty-four hours a day—but he's my best friend, and he's great fun."

—WHITNEY BALLIETT

•

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

[*From the Police Blotter of the Napa* (*Calif.*) *Sentinel*]

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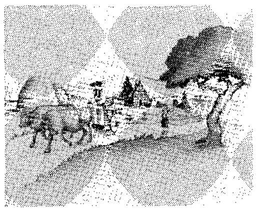

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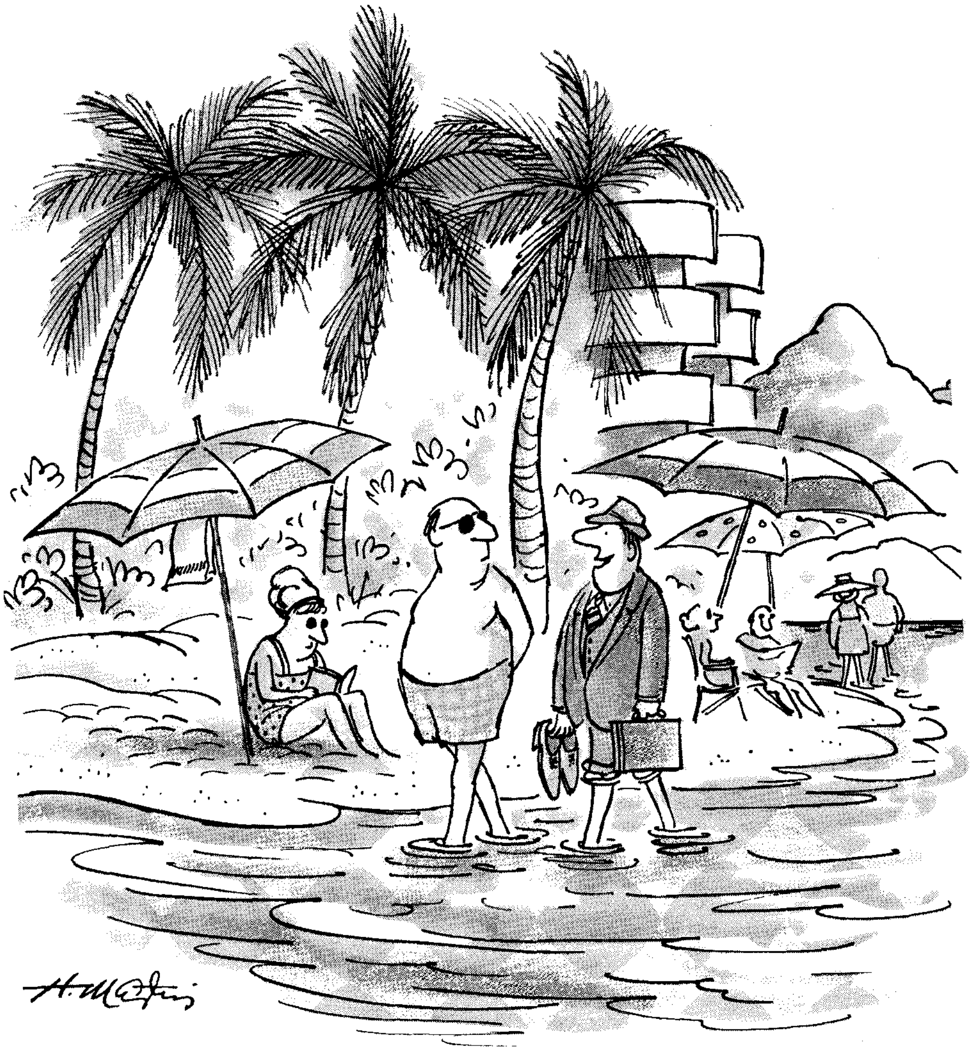
BOOKS

Westering

BERNARD BAILYN'S "The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction" (Knopf; $16.95), a compact summary of more than a decade of research, appeared last summer. It started to change our way of looking at our past. It also served as a preface to Mr. Bailyn's multi-volume study of immigration to North America before the Industrial Revolution, of which the first installment, "Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution" (Knopf; $30), is now available. A surprising amount of detailed source material about common people survives from that age of aristocracy, and "Voyagers to the West" scrutinizes a register of emigrants from England and Scotland which was compiled by customs officers at ports of embarkation between December, 1773, and March, 1776. Emigration had been so heavy that many Britons feared their country would be depopulated—something like three per cent of the population of Scotland emigrated between 1760 and 1775—and the British government designed a questionnaire to discover who was leaving and why, where each emigrant came from, and where he or she was going. Similar records are available from Germany.

Mr. Bailyn's book is impressive and affecting, because of the twofold use he makes of these hitherto neglected archives. The author, who is Adams University Professor at Harvard, has analyzed the data with a computer to wring out every drop of history, and he has followed the lives of individuals to bring us a reality we might have thought attainable only in imagination. He has so much information to impart that he does not stop to argue, yet as he tells his story he demolishes a host of myths that plague our thinking. He explains that migration across the Atlantic was an extension of migrations within Europe, and data he cited in "Peopling" make hash of the notion that pre-industrial Europeans lived stable lives in stable communities. Migration here was related to events in Europe, and both volumes show how closely the Colonies were bound to the rest of the world, which shipped us a formidably cosmopolitan population. At least four languages were spoken in eighteenth-century Georgia. The immigrants described in "Voyagers" found "no single 'American' pattern of family and community organization." Mr. Bailyn attributes the rush of immigrants to land speculation and to a chronic shortage of labor in the Colonies, and he finds that these magnetic forces attracted different kinds of immigrant. Land speculators sought farming families to settle the huge tracts they had acquired. American employers, through their agents, recruited skilled workers—single men, for the most part, who came over alone, often as indentured servants.

Everybody who possibly could invest in North American land did so—middle-class Americans as well as British nabobs—for what are now whole states were for sale at derisory prices. The problem was enticing settlers to turn wilderness into profitable real estate. Some land-investment schemes failed because the cost of development was too high. One failure that Mr. Bailyn describes planned to rescue oppressed Christians from the Turkish Empire and settle them on raw land in Florida: promoters collected fourteen hundred and three people from the Mediterranean—Italians, Greeks, Corsicans, and Minorcans, men, women, and children—and transported them to New Smyrna, where, between 1768 and 1777, eighty per cent of them died, victims of malnutrition, disease, and the brutality of overseers attempting to salvage the project. More of Mr. Bailyn's land-settlement stories, however, tell of successes, including the migration of Yorkshire farmers to Nova Scotia and the migration of Scottish farmers to Vermont and New York. His account of conditions on both sides of the Atlantic is a practical guide to eighteenth-century farming. He describes that abstraction "the



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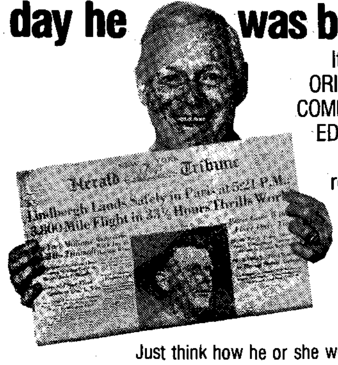
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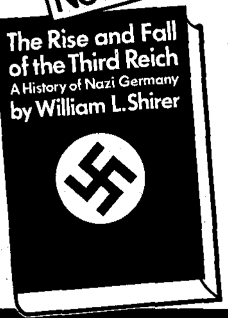
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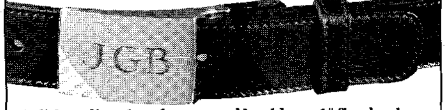

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agricultural revolution" as specific changes and specific effects on particular pieces of land in Yorkshire and Scotland. Yorkshire's great landowners, bent on improvement, radically reorganized their acreage; raised rents on the new parcels, which were fewer, larger, and more productive; and celebrated their new riches by building magnificent houses, whose architecture, interior decoration, and gardens are admired and studied today. In their own time, the construction of any one of these nonesuch mansions was the signal for an exodus of tenants who could not or would not pay the new rents on the manor. The easiest aspect of land speculation for us to grasp is the economic calculation. "Buy the acre, sell the foot" is an American adage, and bookkeeping rather than music may be the universal language of Western man. Where our imagination needs help is in envisioning American land as it was: seeing, for example, picture-postcard Vermont as the Lowland Scots farmers found it—mere nature, as strange to them as to us.

In recent years, black historians have reminded us how much of our country was built by African slaves. Slaves are present in "Voyagers," but the book pays more attention to other kinds of unfree labor—indentured servants and convicts. It is shocking to read how much of our original growth was the product of servitude rather than liberty, and the exploitative harshness of the Colonial labor market is shocking, too, even though the author warns us at the start that his history occurs in a "pre-humanitarian" age. With labor, as with land, Mr. Bailyn recounts the participants' calculations. European workers who were not wholly destitute received conflicting advice about whether to pay their own passage to America and arrive free but penniless or to hold on to their savings and sign indentures—contracts that exchanged a specific number of years' labor for transportation to America. The middlemen hoped to sell the indentured servants and their time for more than the cost of shipping them, and their calculations aimed at speed from the moment of recruitment in Europe to the moment of sale of the workers on New World docks. The passage itself might defy calculation, because of the caprices of the Atlantic, and the effects of weather, crowding, and disease on the servants belowdecks. Mr. Bailyn finds no certain figure for the death rate on the crossings. Estimates agree it was lower than that aboard slave ships, but one eyewitness, Tom Paine, thought survival chancy. Servants who did not sell quickly in American ports were "lumped" wholesale and bought by "soul drivers," who also bought convicts and marched these groups through the country, peddling them by the way or auctioning them at inland market towns. Mr. Bailyn describes the American enterprises that were most voracious for labor. Ironworks needed miners, colliers, quarriers, carters, woodcutters, founders, finers, carpenters, and blacksmiths as well as unskilled laborers. On the eve of the Revolution, there were more than two hundred and fifty ironworks—industrial settlements in the American woods which produced a seventh of the world's iron. Mr. Bailyn notes that the United States did not match that level of production until after the Civil War.

This discontinuity in our own past development may suggest that many of our economic plans and expectations for Third World countries are excessive, but Mr. Bailyn's purpose is not to counsel on policy. His concern—his passion—is to make the emigrants and their experiences live once more. He quotes the recollections of John Harrower, an indentured servant who was lucky enough to be bought at dockside, and of Peter Williamson and James Revel, who were driven upcountry for sale. Their words clarify the meaning of "pre-humanitarian." It has sometimes been alleged that victims or losers or sufferers in earlier times were less sensitive to misfortune than we are, but Mr. Bailyn's memoirists feel exactly what we would—fear, humiliation, and resentment at those who drove them, Williamson said, "like a parcel of sheep to the slaughter, exposing us for sale in all public fairs and markets, as brute beasts." Those who bid and those who observed, however, did not feel, as presumably we would, much active sympathy. Mr. Bailyn provides, as well, an idea of how the emigrants looked: in collaboration with the artist Richard Schlecht, he has included a portrait gallery of indentured servants based on descriptions in advertisements for the return of runaways. Mr. Bailyn has complied with modern historical demands for the statistical and quantifiable—demands that have been useful in reducing intrusions of guesswork and opinion but that

threatened for a while to make history something other than a human story. He has also gone far beyond number, and made us understand this epic of hardship and adaptability as if we had been part of it. His fusions—of the general and the particular, of the abstract and the concrete, of thought and feeling—are the ideal of modern historical writing.
—NAOMI BLIVEN

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

ALL WE NEED OF HELL, by Harry Crews (Harper & Row; $14.95). We're down in Gainesville, Florida, here, in the unhappy company of a youngish lawyer named Duffy Deeter and his fat little son ("a huge, soft, white slug"); his albino wife, whose chief interests in life have become her hair and shopping for bargain living-room furniture; and a faithless, cocaine-snorting mistress named Marvella Sweat. Duffy is a certain kind of contemporary American, consumed with the perfection of his body, his skill at such non-team sports as handball, biking, running, and karate, and the comforts of Zen. A vicious handball game in a public park puts him very literally in touch with a black Miami Dolphin running back named Tump Walker. Tump is not only tough but wise, and he senses that Duffy (whom he instantly takes to) needs help. How he and Duffy work out Duffy's problems is Mr. Crews' highly entertaining story, dark in many of its details, but with an ending as happy as any imagined by William Saroyan.

ADVENTURES WITH JULIA, by Candace Denning (North Point; $13.95). A short and shrewd first novel—its title tongue-in-cheek—about a frustrated former child. "HELP! I'M BEING KIDNAPPED" was the sign Julia used to hold up, hopefully, to passing motorists when she was obliged to take long trips with her parents. Now, at age thirty-six, she attempts to get the attention of her husband, but all her methods—from interviews and appointments to dates and rendezvous—leave her feeling less reckless and less powerful than ever. Candace Denning divides fewer than a hundred and fifty pages into more than thirty episodes with singsong headings such as "Julia Visits the Dentist" and "Julia Calls the Police": a technique suggesting that the largest of Julia's problems has been the smallness of her plans.

NIGHT OF THE FOX, by Jack Higgins (Simon & Schuster; $17.95). It is the spring of 1944, with D Day looming. An American colonel privy to the secret of its time and place is cast up, wounded, on the Nazi-occupied island of Jersey. He is momentarily safe, but he must be rescued before the Nazis find him and extract his vital secret. Only the brilliant German-speaking philosophy don and British Special Operations Executive Colonel Harry Martineau is man enough for the job—pale, deadly, quiet-spoken Harry. He meets a beautiful nineteen-year-old nurse who luckily grew up on Jersey and speaks French with a Breton accent, and there is more—much more—including a Jewish doppelgänger and a cast of notables (Eisenhower, Hitler, Rommel) and references to Harry's acquaintance with Freud and Bertrand Russell and Sartre. All that's lacking to give the reader his money's worth is action and suspense and any kind of imagination.

GENERAL

NUNCA MÁS: THE REPORT OF THE ARGENTINE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE DISAPPEARED, with an introduction by Ronald Dworkin (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, in association with Index on Censorship, London; $22.50). After Argentina's military government collapsed, in 1982, its legally elected successor, under the Presidency of Raúl Alfonsín, appointed a commission to investigate the government terrorism that had been responsible for the disappearance of Argentine men, women, and children, clergy and laity. This is the commission's definitive report. Its main purpose was to place the facts before the Argentine public, for the behavior it uncovered was so unthinkable that many Argentines believed, or wanted to believe, the military government's denials of its terror. The report recounts case upon case of kidnapping, torture, and murder by military forces, and identifies the sites of secret prisons and burial grounds. Such doubts as remain concern missing persons whose fates have not yet been ascertained: the commission believes that the nine thousand people it has accounted for are not all the victims.

REAGAN'S AMERICA: INNOCENTS AT HOME, by Garry Wills (Doubleday;

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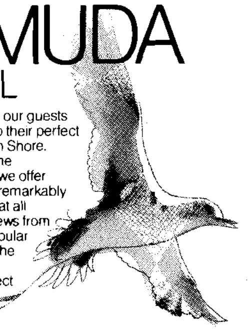

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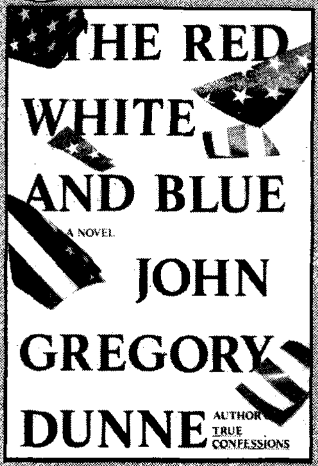

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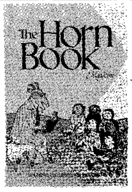

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$19.95). Mr. Wills turns up evidence of Ronald Reagan's intelligence (good marks in school), his resourcefulness (success as a radio broadcaster extemporizing "eyewitness" descriptions of baseball games that he saw only on ticker tape), and his charm (he seems to have always been surrounded by friends, admirers, and mentors). But he believes that Reagan early acquired a habit of self-deception amounting to fantasy. Although the Midwestern towns in which he was raised owed their existence to federal spending, he shared his fellow-citizens' hostility to government and their refusal to acknowledge their dependence on its largesse. According to Mr. Wills, Reagan misunderstood or misrepresented conflicts in organizations ranging from Eureka College to the Screen Actors' Guild and has continued the pattern in political life. He has never, Mr. Wills maintains, grasped the concepts of improper influence and conflict of interest. Mr. Wills' Reagan says one thing and does another without knowing it, and is able to persuade the electorate of his effectiveness because it believes the same myths he does. However, the nation's response to the revelation of the Iran-Contra arms deal—which occurred after this analysis concludes—suggests that voters are not as besotted as Mr. Wills thinks.

WILLA CATHER: THE EMERGING VOICE, by Sharon O'Brien (Oxford; $24.95). This biographical and literary study traces Willa Cather's life from her birth, in Virginia, in 1873, and her migration with her family to Nebraska, in 1883, to her career as an editor and writer, which, beginning in 1896, took her from rural and small-town America to Pittsburgh, Boston, and New York. The volume concludes in 1913, just after Cather has published "O Pioneers!" and has begun work on "The Song of the Lark." Her long apprenticeship is over, and her success comes, by no coincidence, with a novel that draws upon the raw background she has fled. Conflict between rusticity and urbanity has been a staple of American letters from the beginning, both as a subject of literature and as an element of writers' biographies, but in this work it is subsidiary to the biographer's interest in a feminist psychoanalysis of Cather, who was a lesbian. Cather herself is often obscured here by psychological generalizations.

HELLAS: A PORTRAIT OF GREECE, by Nicholas Gage (Villard; $17.95). This book could serve as a rewarding companion on a trip to Greece, but it is more than a guide. The author was born in a tiny village in Epirus, and (as he related in "Eleni," the celebrated narrative of his investigation of his mother's death at the hands of Communist guerrillas) came to this country as a youthful refugee from the Greek civil war. In the nineteen-seventies, he was a regional correspondent for the *Times* in Athens. He takes us on a journey through the country and to its islands, giving us, along the way, a picture of the Greek people. His writing is informal, and is remarkable for its color and sharp detail, as well as for its expression of an almost devout love for Greece. There is a map, and each of the book's fourteen chapters is headed by a full-page photograph, unfortunately without caption.

MYSTERY AND CRIME

SIDESWIPE, by Charles Willeford (St. Martin's; $15.95). Mr. Willeford has always had his own arresting way of telling a story, and this story, which continues the adventures of the Miami homicide detective Hoke Moseley, is more peculiarly arresting than usual. It is all loose threads until almost the very end. Hoke has suffered an attack of acedia and withdrawn to his father's home. There is a retired Detroit autoworker named Stanley Sinkiewicz, who is falsely jailed on a charge of child molestation. There is a professional armed robber named Troy Loudon, who briefly shares Stanley's jail cell. There is Hoke's pregnant police partner, Ellita Sanchez. There is a nonobjective painter from Barbados named James Frietas-Smith. There is a stripper with a horribly disfigured face and a beautiful body. We are shown all these (and a few others) pretty much in the round, and Mr. Willeford grips us because he makes us care about them all.

•

In the USA's gallery of sports celebrities, Conner seems to fit in that curious category of competitors who are obsessed with winning to the point of obsession.—*Mark Purdy in the Lexington* (*Ky.*) *Herald-Leader.*

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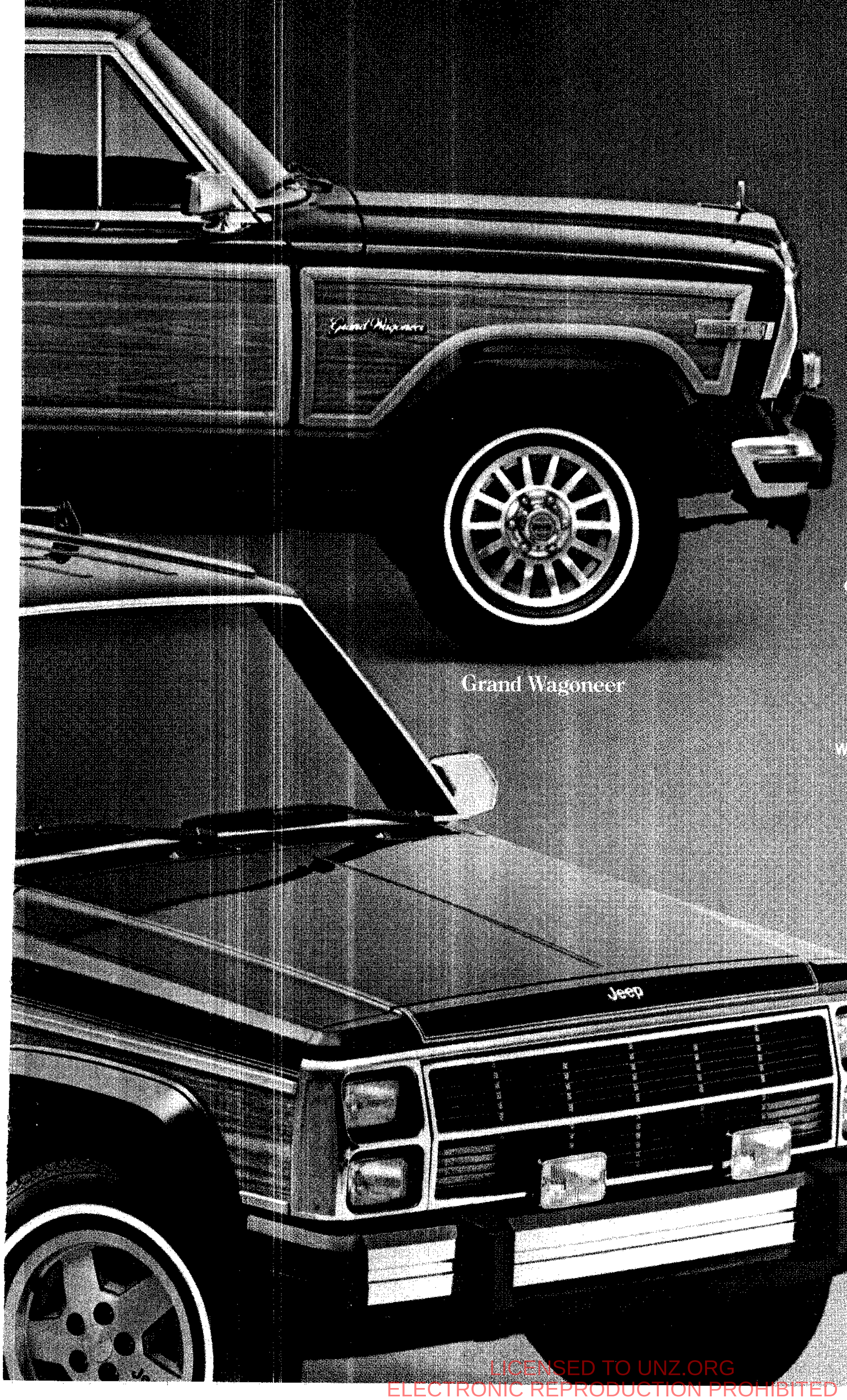

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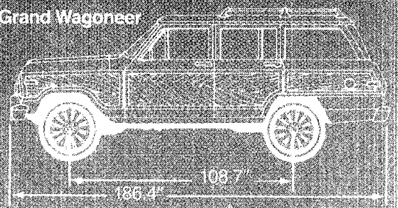

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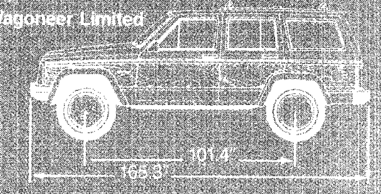

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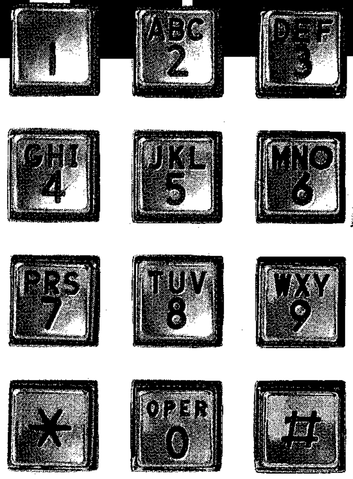

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